

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Recommended for Class XII as per Latest CBSE Syllabus



SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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Chapter

1

Mr. Sherlock Holmes

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who was usually very late in the mornings, save¹ upon those not infrequent occasions when he was up all night, was seated at the breakfast table. I stood upon the **hearth-rug**² and picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was a fine, thick piece of wood, **bulbous-headed**³, of the sort which is known as a "Penang lawyer." Just under the head was a broad silver band nearly an inch across. "To James Mortimer, M.R.C.S., from his friends of the C.C.H.," was **engraved**⁴ upon it, with the date "1884." It was just such a stick as the old-fashioned family practitioner used to carry — dignified, solid, and reassuring.

"Well, Watson, what do you make of it?"

Holmes was sitting with his back to me, and I had given him no sign of my occupation.

"How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head."

"I have, at least, a well-polished, silver-plated coffee-pot in front of me," said he. "But, tell me, Watson, what do you make of our visitor's stick?"

1. except, 2. freeside mat, 3. bulb-shaped head, 4. etched; embossed

Since we have been so unfortunate as to miss him and have no notion of his errand⁵, this accidental *souvenir*⁶ becomes of importance. Let me hear you reconstruct the man by an examination of it."

"I think," said I, following as far as I could the methods of my companion, "that Dr. Mortimer is a successful, elderly medical man, well-esteemed since those who know him give him this mark of their appreciation."

"Good!" said Holmes. "Excellent!"

"I think also that the probability is in favour of his being a country practitioner who does a great deal of his visiting on foot."

"Why so?"

"Because this stick, though originally a very handsome one has been so knocked about that I can hardly imagine a town practitioner carrying it. The thick-iron ferrule⁷ is worn down, so it is evident that he has done a great amount of walking with it."

"Perfectly sound!" said Holmes.

"And then again, there is the 'friends of the C.C.H.' I should guess that to be the Something Hunt, the local hunt to whose members he has possibly given some surgical assistance, and which has made him a small presentation in return."

"Really, Watson, you excel yourself," said Holmes, pushing back his chair and lighting a cigarette. "I am bound to say that in all the accounts which you have been so good as to give of my own small achievements you have habitually underrated your own abilities. It may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light. Some

5. job or work, 6. token or memento, 7. a ring or cap put around the end of a stick or cane,

people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it. I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt."

He had never said as much before, and I must admit that his words gave me keen pleasure, for I had often been **piqued**⁸ by his indifference to my admiration and to the attempts which I had made to give publicity to his methods. I was proud, too, to think that I had so far mastered his system as to apply it in a way which earned his approval. He now took the stick from my hands and examined it for a few minutes with his naked eyes. Then with an expression of interest he laid down his cigarette, and carrying the cane to the window, he looked over it again with a convex lens.

"Interesting, though elementary," said he as he returned to his favourite corner of the settee. "There are certainly one or two indications upon the stick. It gives us the basis for several deductions."

"Has anything escaped me?" I asked with some self-importance. "I trust that there is nothing of consequence which I have overlooked?"

"I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were **erroneous**⁹. When I said that you stimulated me I meant, to be frank, that in noting your **fallacies**¹⁰ I was occasionally guided towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this instance. The man is certainly a country practitioner. And he walks a good deal."

"Then I was right."

"To that extent."

"But that was all."

8. provoked, 9. wrong, 10. misleading or unsound arguments

"No, no, my dear Watson, not all — by no means all. I would suggest, for example, that a presentation to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital than from a hunt, and that when the initials 'C.C.' are placed before that hospital the words 'Charing Cross' very naturally suggest themselves."

"You may be right."

"The probability lies in that direction. And if we take this as a working hypothesis we have a fresh basis from which to start our construction of this unknown visitor."

"Well, then, supposing that 'C.C.H.' does stand for 'Charing Cross Hospital,' what further inferences may we draw?"

"Do none suggest themselves? You know my methods. Apply them!"

"I can only think of the obvious conclusion that the man has practised in town before going to the country."

"I think that we might venture a little farther than this. Look at it in this light. On what occasion would it be most probable that such a presentation would be made? When would his friends unite to give him a pledge of their good will? Obviously at the moment when Dr. Mortimer withdrew from the service of the hospital in order to start in practice for himself. We know there has been a presentation. We believe there has been a change from a town hospital to a country practice. Is it, then, stretching our inference too far to say that the presentation was on the occasion of the change?"

"It certainly seems probable."

"Now, you will observe that he could not have been on the staff of the hospital, since only a man well-established in a London practice could hold such

a position, and such a one would not drift into the country. What was he, then? If he was in the hospital and yet not on the staff he could only have been a house-surgeon or a house-physician — little more than a senior student. And he left five years ago — the date is on the stick. So your grave, middle-aged family practitioner vanishes into thin air, my dear Watson, and there emerges a young fellow under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent-minded, and the possessor of a favourite dog, which I should describe roughly as being larger than a terrier¹¹ and smaller than a mastiff¹²."

I laughed incredulously¹³ as Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his settee and blew little wavering rings of smoke up to the ceiling.

Ask yourself while Reading

1. What is the main work of Mr. Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Watson?
 2. What are they talking about at the breakfast table?
 3. What made them to start their early morning discussion?
 4. Do you think that Holmes is appreciating Watson when he says, "Watson you excel yourself."?
 5. Why did Holmes differ from Watson's opinion regarding the stranger who had left his stick behind sans leaving his visiting card?
-

"As to the latter part, I have no means of checking you," said I, "but at least it is not difficult to find out a few particulars about the man's age and professional career." From my small medical shelf I took down the

11. a breed of dog, usually small, 12. a breed of dog; large and powerful

13. disbelievingly

Medical Directory and turned up the name. There were several Mortimers, but only one who could be our visitor. I read his record aloud.

"Mortimer, James, M.R.C.S., 1882, Grimpen, Dartmoor, Devon. House-surgeon, from 1882 to 1884, at Charing Cross Hospital. Winner of the Jackson prize for Comparative Pathology, with essay entitled 'Is Disease a Reversion?' Corresponding member of the Swedish Pathological Society. Author of 'Some Freaks of Atavism' (Lancet 1882). 'Do We Progress?' (Journal of Psychology, March, 1883). Medical Officer for the **parishes**¹⁴ of Grimpen, Thorsley, and High Barrow."

"No mention of that local hunt, Watson," said Holmes with a mischievous smile, "but a country doctor, as you very astutely¹⁵ observed. I think that I am fairly justified in my inferences. As to the adjectives, I said, if I remember right, amiable, unambitious, and absent-minded. It is my experience that it is only an amiable man in this world who receives testimonials, only an unambitious one who abandons a London career for the country, and only an absent-minded one who leaves his stick and not his visiting-card after waiting an hour in your room."

"And the dog?"

"Has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. Being a heavy stick the dog has held it tightly by the middle, and the marks of his teeth are very plainly visible. The dog's jaw, as shown in the space between these marks, is too broad in my opinion for a terrier and not broad enough for a

14. small churches, 15. cleverly

mastiff. It may have been — yes, by Jove, it is a curly-haired spaniel.”

He had risen and paced the room as he spoke. Now he halted in the recess of the window. There was such a ring of conviction in his voice that I glanced up in surprise.

“My dear fellow, how can you possibly be so sure of that?”

“For the very simple reason that I see the dog himself on our very door-step, and there is the ring of its owner. Don’t move, I beg you, Watson. He is a professional brother of yours, and your presence may be of assistance to me. Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair which is walking into your life, and you know not whether for good or ill. What does Dr. James Mortimer, the man of science, ask of Sherlock Holmes, the specialist in crime? Come in!”

The appearance of our visitor was a surprise to me, since I had expected a typical country practitioner. He was a very tall, thin man, with a long nose like a beak, which jutted out between two keen, gray eyes, set closely together and sparkling brightly from behind a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He was clad in a professional but rather slovenly¹⁶ fashion, for his frock-coat was dingy¹⁷ and his trousers frayed¹⁸. Though young, his long back was already bowed, and he walked with a forward thrust of his head and a general air of peering benevolence. As he entered his eyes fell upon the stick in Holmes’ hand, and he ran towards it with an exclamation of joy. “I am so very glad,” said he. “I was not sure

16. slipshod; negligently; untidely, 17. shabby; dull, 18. worn

whether I had left it here or in the Shipping Office. I would not lose that stick for the world."

"A presentation, I see," said Holmes.

"Yes, sir."

"From Charing Cross Hospital?"

"From one or two friends there on the occasion of my marriage."

"Dear, dear, that's bad!" said Holmes, shaking his head.

Dr. Mortimer blinked through his glasses in mild astonishment.

"Why was it bad?"

"Only that you have disarranged our little deductions. Your marriage, you say?"

"Yes, sir. I married, and so left the hospital, and with it all hopes of a consulting practice. It was necessary to make a home of my own."

"Come, come, we are not so far wrong, after all," said Holmes. "And now, Dr. James Mortimer —"

"Mister, sir, Mister — a humble M.R.C.S."

"And a man of precise mind, evidently."

"A dabbler¹⁹ in science, Mr. Holmes, a picker up of shells on the shores of the great unknown ocean. I presume that it is Mr. Sherlock Holmes whom I am addressing and not —"

"No, this is my friend Dr. Watson."

"Glad to meet you, sir. I have heard your name mentioned in connection with that of your friend. You interest me very much, Mr. Holmes. I had hardly expected so dolichocephalic a skull or such well-marked supra-orbital development. Would you have any objection to my running my finger along your parietal fissure²⁰? A cast of your skull, sir,

19. one who works in an irregular manner, 20. gap at the top of the head

until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome²¹, but I confess that I covet your skull."

Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor into a chair. "You are an enthusiast in your line of thought, I perceive, sir, as I am in mine," said he. "I observe from your forefinger that you make your own cigarettes. Have no hesitation in lighting one."

The man drew out paper and tobacco and twirled the one up in the other with surprising dexterity. He had long, quivering fingers as agile and restless as the antennae of an insect.

Holmes was silent, but his little darting glances²² showed me the interest which he took in our curious companion. "I presume, sir," said he at last, "that it was not merely for the purpose of examining my skull that you have done me the honour to call here last night and again today?"

"No, sir, no; though I am happy to have had the opportunity of doing that as well. I came to you, Mr. Holmes, because I recognized that I am myself an unpractical man and because I am suddenly confronted with a most serious and extraordinary problem. Recognizing, as I do, that you are the second highest expert in Europe —"

"Indeed, sir! May I inquire who has the honour to be the first?" asked Holmes with some asperity²³.

"To the man of precisely scientific mind the work of Monsieur Bertillon must always appeal strongly."

"Then had you not better consult him?"

"I said, sir, to the precisely scientific mind. But as a practical man of affairs it is acknowledged

21. flattering, 22. quick movement of the eyes, 23. sharpness of tone

that you stand alone. I trust, sir, that I have not inadvertently²⁴—”

“Just a little,” said Holmes. “I think, Dr. Mortimer, you would do wisely if without more ado you would kindly tell me plainly what the exact nature of the problem is in which you demand my assistance.”

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why was Watson surprised at the appearance of the stranger?
 2. What did Holmes actually mean when he made remark, “Dear, dear, that’s bad!”, when the stranger told him that the stick was a gift to him from his one or two friends on the auspicious occasion of his marriage?
 3. What was the objective of the stranger’s visit to meet Holmes?
 4. Why could Holmes not believe about the stranger’s objective to visit him?
 5. What other objective of his visit did the stranger reveal to Holmes when he felt that he could not befool him on his desire to see him?
-

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

At the advent of the 20th century we find Sherlock Holmes and Watson being room mates at 221B, Baker Street, a rental residential place in London. At that time, Holmes was the only consulting detective; over the years, Dr. Watson joined him on his investigations and both of them wrote books about their adventures in crime.

24. unknowingly

Sherlock was a genius in the field of detective reasoning. He was always logical in his approach and was well organized. He never dealt with any case emotionally. Dr. Watson, on the other hand, was an 'everyman' kind of person who tried to be as detached as his friends but could never manage to disengage his emotions. They were perfect characters who would complement each other.

Holmes had developed his habits of observation to an amazing degree. Just by looking at a person he could deduce his profession and his background by scrutinizing details of his clothes, face and so on forth. He never guessed but arrived at conclusion based on reasoning...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Morning hours of a day in 1889, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson wake up to discover about a visitor to their apartment the previous night but departed without meeting. Left behind a walking stick bearing an inscription.
2. The two begin to make deductions about the character and occupation of the visitor.
3. Watson describes a likeable old country doctor who received the stick from a local hunt.
4. Holmes on the other hand, argues for the case of a young practitioner resented with a stick when he left London's C.C.H.
5. As it turns out, Mortimer had been given the cane when he was married. Holmes was slightly off as he had not guessed it right.
6. Dr. Mortimer is tall, though his frame being hunched over wears glasses and an appropriate but rather shabby dress.

16 □ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

7. Though a person with scientific learning, Mortimer is also a vulnerable to superstitions.
8. Mortimer admits himself to be 'an unpractical man' and has come to get advice on his problems.
9. Holmes asks him to expand on the trouble that has brought him there.

EXERCISE

1. On which ground did Sherlock Holmes said to Mr. Watson that the conclusions drawn by him were wrong about the stranger?
2. How did Holmes establish the truth that the stranger was a young fellow under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent minded and the possessor of a favoured dog?
3. What made stranger run towards the stick with an exclamation of joy when he saw stick in Holmes' hand? Answer with suitable reasons?
4. How did the writer conclude that the stranger made his own cigarettes?
5. How did Sherlock Holmes conclude that the stranger had visited them to receive their help in some cases?

Character Sketches

1. Write a brief character-sketch of Sherlock Holmes on the basis of his conversation with his friend Mr. Watson and the stranger.
2. Write a brief character-sketch of Watson with reference to the events took place.
3. Write a brief pen-portrait of the stranger as he finally turned out to be.

Chapter

2

The Curse of The Baskervilles

"I have in my pocket a manuscript," said Dr. James Mortimer.

"I observed it as you entered the room," said Holmes.

"It is an old manuscript."

"Early eighteenth century, unless it is a forgery."

"How can you say that, sir?"

"You have presented an inch or two of it to my examination all the time that you have been talking. It would be a poor expert who could not give the date of a document within a decade or so. You may possibly have read my little **monograph**¹ upon the subject. I put that at 1730."

"The exact date is 1742." Dr. Mortimer drew it from his breast-pocket. "This family paper was committed to my care by Sir Charles Baskerville, whose sudden and tragic death some three months ago created so much excitement in Devonshire. I may say that I was his personal friend as well as his medical attendant. He was a strong-minded man, sir, **shrewd**², practical, and as unimaginative as I am myself. Yet he took this document very seriously,

1. an amount of single thing, 2. cunning; brainy

and his mind was prepared for just such an end as did eventually overtake him."

Holmes stretched out his hand for the manuscript and flattened it upon his knee. "You will observe, Watson, the alternative use of the long and the short. It is one of several indications which enabled me to fix the date."

I looked over his shoulder at the yellow paper and the faded script. At the head was written: "Baskerville Hall," and below in large, **scrawling**³ figures: "1742."

"It appears to be a statement of some sort."

"Yes, it is a statement of a certain legend which runs in the Baskerville family."

"But I understand that it is something more modern and practical upon which you wish to consult me?"

"Most modern. A most practical, pressing matter, which must be decided within twenty-four hours. But the manuscript is short and is intimately connected with the affair. With your permission I will read it to you."

Holmes leaned back in his chair, placed his fingertips together, and closed his eyes, with an air of resignation. Dr. Mortimer turned the manuscript to the light and read in a high, cracking voice the following curious, old-world narrative:

"Of the origin of the Hound of the Baskervilles there have been many statements, yet as I come in a direct line from Hugo Baskerville, and as I had the story from my father, who also had it from his, I have set

it down with all belief that it occurred even as is here set forth. And I would have you believe, my sons, that the same Justice which punishes sin may also most graciously forgive it, and that no ban is so heavy but that by prayer and repentance it may be removed. Learn then from this story not to fear the fruits of the past, but rather to be **circumspect**⁴ in the future, that those foul passions whereby our family has suffered so grievously may not again be loosed to our undoing.

“Know then that in the time of the Great Rebellion (the history of which by the learned Lord Clarendon I most earnestly commend to your attention) this Manor of Baskerville was held by Hugo of that name, nor can it be **gainsaid**⁵ that he was a most wild, **profane**⁶, and godless man. This, in truth, his neighbours might have pardoned, seeing that saints have never flourished in those parts, but there was in him a certain wanton and cruel humour which made his name a byword through the West. It chanced that this Hugo came to love (if, indeed, so dark a passion may be known under so bright a name) the daughter of a **yeoman**⁷ who held lands near the Baskerville estate. But the young maiden, being discreet and of good repute, would ever avoid him, for she feared his evil name. So it came to pass that one Michaelmas this Hugo, with five or six of his

4. watchful; careful, 5. contradicted, 6. unholy; not religious, 7. farmer who cultivates his own land

idle and wicked companions, stole down upon the farm and carried off the maiden, her father and brothers being from home, as he well knew. When they had brought her to the Hall the maiden was placed in an upper chamber, while Hugo and his friends sat down to a long **carouse**⁸, as was their nightly custom. Now, the poor lass upstairs was like to have her wits turned at the singing and shouting and terrible oaths which came up to her from below, for they say that the words used by Hugo Baskerville, when he was in wine, were such as might blast the man who said them. At last in the stress of her fear she did that which might have **daunted**⁹ the bravest or most active man, for by the aid of the growth of ivy which covered (and still covers) the south wall she came down from under the eaves, and so homeward across the moor, there being three **leagues**¹⁰ betwixt the Hall and her father's farm.

"It chanced that some little time later Hugo left his guests to carry food and drink — with other worse things, perchance — to his captive, and so found the cage empty and the bird escaped. Then, as it would seem, he became as one that hath a devil, for, rushing down the stairs into the dining-hall, he sprang upon the great table, **flagons**¹¹ and **trenchers**¹² flying before him, and he cried aloud before all the company that he would

8. to drink and make merry, 9. discouraged, 10. unit of distance (roughly 4.8 km per league), 11. bottles for holding liquids or wines, 12. dishes for holding or serving food

that very night render his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he might but overtake the wench¹³. And while the revellers¹⁴ stood aghast¹⁵ at the fury of the man, one more wicked or, it may be, more drunken than the rest, cried out that they should put the hounds upon her. Whereat Hugo ran from the house, crying to his grooms that they should saddle his mare and unkennel the pack, and giving the hounds a kerchief of the maid's, he swung them to the line, and so off full cry in the moonlight over the moor.

"Now, for some space the revellers stood agape¹⁶, unable to understand all that had been done in such haste. But anon¹⁷ their bemused¹⁸ wits awoke to the nature of the deed which was like to be done upon the moorlands. Everything was now in an uproar, some calling for their pistols, some for their horses, and some for another flask of wine. But at length some sense came back to their crazed minds, and the whole of them, thirteen in number, took horse and started in pursuit. The moon shone clear above them, and they rode swiftly abreast, taking that course which the maid must needs have taken if she were to reach her own home.

"They had gone a mile or two when they passed one of the night shepherds upon the moorlands, and they cried to him to know if he had seen the hunt. And the man, as the story

13. a village girl, 14. merry-makers, 15. filled with sudden fright or horror; horrified, 16. open mouthed, 17. soon; in a short time, 18. bewildered or confused

goes, was so crazed with fear that he could scarce speak, but at last he said that he had indeed seen the unhappy maiden, with the hounds upon her track. 'But I have seen more than that,' said he, 'for Hugo Baskerville passed me upon his black mare, and there ran mute behind him such a hound of hell as God forbid should ever be at my heels.' So the drunken squires cursed the shepherd and rode onward. But soon their skins turned cold, for there came a galloping across the moor, and the black mare, **dabbled**¹⁹ with white froth, went past with trailing bridle and empty saddle. Then the revellers rode close together, for a great fear was on them, but they still followed over the moor, though each, had he been alone, would have been right glad to have turned his horse's head. Riding slowly in this fashion they came at last upon the hounds. These, though known for their valour and their breed, were **whimpering**²⁰ in a cluster at the head of a deep dip or goyal, as we call it, upon the moor, some slinking away and some, with starting **hackles**²¹ and staring eyes, gazing down the narrow valley before them.

"The company had come to a halt, more sober men, as you may guess, than when they started. The most of them would by no means advance, but three of them, the boldest, or it may be the most drunken, rode forward down the goyal. Now, it opened into a broad space in

19. spattered; lightly covered with, 20. crying with low; broken sound,
21. the hair on the back of an animal's neck

which stood two of those great stones, still to be seen there, which were set by certain forgotten peoples in the days of old. The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there in the centre lay the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of fear and of fatigue. But it was not the sight of her body, nor yet was it that of the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three daredevil roysterers, but it was that, standing over Hugo, and plucking at his throat, there stood a foul thing, a great, black beast, shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon. And even as they looked the thing tore the throat out of Hugo Baskerville, on which, as it turned its blazing eyes and dripping jaws upon them, the three shrieked with fear and rode for dear life, still screaming, across the moor. One, it is said, died that very night of what he had seen, and the other twain were but broken men for the rest of their days.

"Such is the tale, my sons, of the coming of the hound which is said to have **plagued**²² the family so sorely ever since. If I have set it down it is because that which is clearly known hath less terror than that which is but hinted at and guessed. Nor can it be denied that many of the family have been unhappy in their deaths, which have been sudden, bloody, and mysterious. Yet may we shelter ourselves in the infinite goodness of Providence, which

22. harassed; cursed

would not forever punish the innocent beyond that third or fourth generation which is threatened in Holy Writ. To that Providence, my sons, I hereby commend you, and I counsel you by way of caution to forbear from crossing the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are exalted.

"[This from Hugo Baskerville to his sons Rodger and John, with instructions that they say nothing thereof to their sister Elizabeth.]"

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. On which ground did Sherlock Holmes say that the document with Dr. Mortimer dated back to 1730?
 2. Why did Sir Charles Baskerville committed this family document to the care of Dr. Mortimer?
 3. What was the special relationship between Sir Charles Baskerville and Dr. Mortimer?
 4. Write a short note about that document.
 5. What made Dr. Mortimer read out the full document to Sherlock Holmes?
 6. Where did the family document in this eighteenth century originate from regarding the story of Baskerville Hall as explained by Hugo Baskerville to his sons, Roger and John?
 7. What was the information of the night shepherd to the chasing party of thirteen regarding the unhappy maiden?
-

When Dr. Mortimer had finished reading this singular narrative he pushed his spectacles up on his forehead and stared across at Mr. Sherlock Holmes. The latter yawned and tossed the end of his cigarette into the fire.

"Well?" said he.

"Do you not find it interesting?"

"To a collector of fairy tales."

Dr. Mortimer drew a folded newspaper out of his pocket.

"Now, Mr. Holmes, we will give you something a little more recent. This is the Devon County Chronicle of May 14th of this year. It is a short account of the facts elicited²³ at the death of Sir Charles Baskerville which occurred a few days before that date."

My friend leaned a little forward and his expression became intent. Our visitor readjusted his glasses and began:

"The recent sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville, whose name has been mentioned as the probable Liberal candidate for Mid-Devon at the next election, has cast a gloom over the county. Though Sir Charles had resided at Baskerville Hall for a comparatively short period his amiability of character and extreme generosity had won the affection and respect of all who had been brought into contact with him. In these days of **nouveaux riches**²⁴ it is refreshing to find a case where the **scion**²⁵ of an old county family which has fallen upon evil days is able to make his own fortune and to bring it back with him to restore the fallen grandeur of his line. Sir Charles, as is well known, made large sums of money in South African speculation. More wise than those who go on

23. brought out, 24. newly-rich, 25. descendant; child

until the wheel turns against them, he realized his gains and returned to England with them. It is only two years since he took up his residence at Baskerville Hall, and it is common talk how large were those schemes of reconstruction and improvement which have been interrupted by his death. Being himself childless, it was his openly expressed desire that the whole countryside should, within his own lifetime, profit by his good fortune, and many will have personal reasons for bewailing his untimely end. His generous donations to local and county charities have been frequently chronicled in these columns.

"The circumstances connected with the death of Sir Charles cannot be said to have been entirely cleared up by the inquest²⁶, but at least enough has been done to dispose of those rumours to which local superstition has given rise. There is no reason whatever to suspect foul play, or to imagine that death could be from any but natural causes. Sir Charles was a widower, and a man who may be said to have been in some ways of an eccentric habit of mind. In spite of his considerable wealth he was simple in his personal tastes, and his indoor servants at Baskerville Hall consisted of a married couple named Barrymore, the husband acting as butler and the wife as housekeeper. Their evidence, corroborated²⁷ by that of several friends, tends to show that Sir Charles'

26. investigation; inquiry, 27. verified; supported; proved

health has for some time been impaired, and points especially to some affection of the heart, **manifesting**²⁸ itself in changes of colour, breathlessness, and acute attacks of nervous depression. Dr. James Mortimer, the friend and medical attendant of the deceased, has given evidence to the same effect.

"The facts of the case are simple. Sir Charles Baskerville was in the habit every night before going to bed of walking down the famous yew **alley**²⁹ of Baskerville Hall. The evidence of the Barrymores shows that this had been his custom. On the fourth of May Sir Charles had declared his intention of starting next day for London, and had ordered Barrymore to prepare his luggage. That night he went out as usual for his nocturnal walk, in the course of which he was in the habit of smoking a cigar. He never returned. At twelve o'clock Barrymore, finding the hall door still open, became alarmed, and, lighting a lantern, went in search of his master. The day had been wet, and Sir Charles' footmarks were easily traced down the alley. Halfway down this walk there is a gate which leads out on to the moor. There were indications that Sir Charles had stood for some little time here. He then proceeded down the alley, and it was at the far end of it that his body was discovered. One fact which has not been explained is the statement of Barrymore that his master's footprints altered their character

28. showing; making obvious, 29. a narrow back lane

from the time that he passed the moor-gate, and that he appeared from thence onward to have been walking upon his toes. One Murphy, a gipsy horse-dealer, was on the moor at no great distance at the time, but he appears by his own confession to have been the worse for drink. He declares that he heard cries but is unable to state from what direction they came. No signs of violence were to be discovered upon Sir Charles' person, and though the doctor's evidence pointed to an almost incredible facial distortion — so great that Dr. Mortimer refused at first to believe that it was indeed his friend and patient who lay before him — it was explained that that is a symptom which is not unusual in cases of **dyspnoea**³⁰ and death from cardiac exhaustion. This explanation was borne out by the post-mortem examination, which showed long-standing organic disease, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence. It is well that this is so, for it is obviously of the utmost importance that Sir Charles' heir should settle at the Hall and continue the good work which has been so sadly interrupted. Had the prosaic finding of the coroner³¹ not finally put an end to the romantic stories which have been whispered in connection with the affair, it might have been difficult to find a tenant for Baskerville Hall. It is understood that the

30. difficult breathing, 31. an officer who investigates any death not resulting from natural causes

next of kin is Mr. Henry Baskerville, if he be still alive, the son of Sir Charles Baskerville's younger brother. The young man when last heard of was in America, and inquiries are being instituted³² with a view to informing him of his good fortune."

Dr. Mortimer refolded his paper and replaced it in his pocket. "Those are the public facts, Mr. Holmes, in connection with the death of Sir Charles Baskerville."

"I must thank you," said Sherlock Holmes, "for calling my attention to a case which certainly presents some features of interest. I had observed some newspaper comment at the time, but I was exceedingly preoccupied³³ by that little affair of the Vatican cameos, and in my anxiety to oblige the Pope I lost touch with several interesting English cases. This article, you say, contains all the public facts?"

"It does."

"Then let me have the private ones." He leaned back, put his finger-tips together, and assumed his most impassive³⁴ and judicial expression.

"In doing so," said Dr. Mortimer, who had begun to show signs of some strong emotion, "I am telling that which I have not confided to anyone. My motive for withholding it from the coroner's inquiry is that a man of science shrinks from placing himself in the public position of seeming to indorse a popular superstition. I had the further motive that Baskerville Hall, as the paper says, would certainly remain

32. established; set up, 33. completely engrossed in thought; absorbed, 34. without emotion; calm

untenanted if anything were done to increase its already rather grim reputation. For both these reasons I thought that I was justified in telling rather less than I knew, since no practical good could result from it, but with you there is no reason why I should not be perfectly frank.

"The moor is very sparsely inhabited, and those who live near each other are thrown very much together. For this reason I saw a good deal of Sir Charles Baskerville. With the exception of Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, and Mr. Stapleton, the naturalist, there are no other men of education within many miles. Sir Charles was a retiring³⁵ man, but the chance of his illness brought us together, and a community of interests in science kept us so. He had brought back much scientific information from South Africa, and many a charming evening we have spent together discussing the comparative anatomy of the Bushman and the Hottentot.

"Within the last few months it became increasingly plain to me that Sir Charles' nervous system was strained to the breaking point. He had taken this legend which I have read you exceedingly to heart — so much so that, although he would walk in his own grounds, nothing would induce³⁶ him to go out upon the moor at night. Incredible as it may appear to you, Mr. Holmes, he was honestly convinced that a dreadful fate overhung his family, and certainly the records which he was able to give of his ancestors were not encouraging. The idea of some ghastly presence constantly haunted³⁷ him, and on more than one occasion he has asked me

35. shy; reserved, 36. persuade or influence, 37. worried or disturbed

whether I had on my medical journeys at night ever seen any strange creature or heard the baying of a hound. The latter question he put to me several times, and always with a voice which vibrated with excitement.

"I can well remember driving up to his house in the evening some three weeks before the fatal event. He chanced to be at his hall door. I had descended from my **gig**³⁸ and was standing in front of him, when I saw his eyes fix themselves over my shoulder and stare past me with an expression of the most dreadful horror. I **whisked**³⁹ round and had just time to catch a glimpse of something which I took to be a large black calf passing at the head of the drive. So excited and alarmed was he that I was compelled to go down to the spot where the animal had been and look around for it. It was gone, however, and the incident appeared to make the worst impression upon his mind. I stayed with him all the evening, and it was on that occasion, to explain the emotion which he had shown, that he confided to my keeping that narrative which I read to you when first I came. I mention this small episode because it assumes some importance in view of the tragedy which followed, but I was convinced at the time that the matter was entirely trivial and that his excitement had no justification.

"It was at my advice that Sir Charles was about to go to London. His heart was, I knew, affected, and the constant anxiety in which he lived, however **chimerical**⁴⁰ the cause of it might be, was evidently

38. a light two-wheeled one-horse carriage, 39. to move quickly,

40. imaginary; wildly fanciful

having a serious effect upon his health. I thought that a few months among the distractions of town would send him back a new man. Mr. Stapleton, a mutual friend who was much concerned at his state of health, was of the same opinion. At the last instant came this terrible catastrophe.

"On the night of Sir Charles' death Barrymore the butler, who made the discovery, sent Perkins the groom on horseback to me, and as I was sitting up late I was able to reach Baskerville Hall within an hour of the event. I checked and corroborated⁴¹ all the facts which were mentioned at the inquest⁴². I followed the footsteps down the yew alley, I saw the spot at the moor-gate where he seemed to have waited, I remarked the change in the shape of the prints after that point, I noted that there were no other footsteps save those of Barrymore on the soft gravel, and finally I carefully examined the body, which had not been touched until my arrival. Sir Charles lay on his face, his arms out, his fingers dug into the ground, and his features convulsed⁴³ with some strong emotion to such an extent that I could hardly have sworn to his identity. There was certainly no physical injury of any kind. But one false statement was made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said that there were no traces upon the ground round the body. He did not observe any. But I did — some little distance off, but fresh and clear."

"Footprints?"

"Footprints."

"A man's or a woman's?"

41. confirmed, 42. investigation made by a coroner into the cause of a death, 43. violent contractions of the muscles

Dr. Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered:

"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound⁴⁴!"

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why was the searching party surprised the most on exploring the bodies of that unhappy maiden and Hugo Baskerville?
 2. What in accordance with the narrator in the written statement plagued the family of Baskerville's ever since the exploring of the body of Hugo Baskerville with a black-beast type hound standing on it, and plucking at his throat?
 3. Why does Hugo Baskerville want his sons to keep this story confidential from their sister, Elizabeth?
-

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

We find Dr. Mortimer wanting Holmes to examine a manuscript he had with him. Holmes had actually written a monograph on the subject of dating manuscripts. The 1742 manuscript was a statement of the legend of the Baskerville family, written by Sir Hugo Baskerville was a "wild, profane and godless" man. One night, he, along with his six companions were very drunk. They had kidnapped the daughter of a yeoman and kept her in an attic as they drank and became even more out of control. The terrified girl had managed to escape herself by climbing down on ivy vine.

The enraged Sir Hugo ordered the dogs to go after her scent from her handkerchief and then he and his friends saddled their horses and rode out after her on the moorland...

44. a breed of dogs trained to pursue game by sight or by scent

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Sir Charles Baskerville has died three months ago, leaving a manuscript with his friend and doctor, James Mortimer.
2. He intends a paper to be a warning to those in the Baskerville line to watch their temperament and beware of the moon in the dark.
3. Mortimer reads it to Watson and Holmes which tells of the fate of wicked Hugo.
4. Hugo and his friends carried off a yeoman's daughter to a room high up in Baskerville Hall.
5. While they all drank the girl climbed down the ivy and began to make her way across the moor.
6. When found missing one of them suggested using the hounds on her, which was quickly acted on by Hugo.
7. Realizing what was happening thirteen of them rode off their horses to stop Hugo and the hounds.
8. A frightened Shepherd tells them that he had seen the chase but also 'a hound of hell' close behind Hugo.
9. Three of the riders continue moving to find the girl dead and a giant black hound rearing out the throat of Hugo Baskerville.
10. Holmes does not find the legend of great interest till Mortimer shows him an article in the newspaper.
11. The article describes Sir Charles as well liked and charitable but sadly that he was an inhabitant of Baskerville Hall for two years only.
12. His death was discovered when he did not return from his nightly walk and his servant Barrymore along with his wife went out looking for him.
13. His body was found with no signs of violence but bad facial distortions.
14. The article ends with the information that Henry Baskerville was the next of kin and interior of Baskerville estate and fortune, he being the nephew of Sir Charles.

15. Mortimer had some additional information also.
16. Mortimer had noticed, while examining the body of his friend that there were footprints of a large hound about twenty yards away.

EXERCISE

1. What was Hugo Baskerville's suggestion to his sons never to do any why?
2. Why did Charles, despite being familiar with the contents of the written statement, make decision to go down the alley in the moor?
3. Why did Mortimer not identify at first the body of Charles Baskerville, in spite of his close nexus with him? Support your answer with suitable logic.
4. After going through Baskerville Hall written statement, Dr. Mortimer said to Sherlock Holmes that he had got some private facts regarding the Baskerville, which he had not revealed to anyone till then. What were those private facts regarding the story of Baskerville Hall? Do you consider that the logic rendered by Dr. Mortimer for concealing them from the public is genuine?
5. What kind of mystery regarding the footprints explored near the body of Charles Baskerville did Dr. Mortimer reveal to Holmes? Do you consider it could bring a new twist to the story? Give your comment.

Character Sketches

1. Write a character-sketch of Sherlock Holmes shedding light on his intelligence as a private detective.
2. Write a character-sketch of Dr. Mortimer as a friend-cum-physician.
3. Write a character-sketch of Barrymore, the butler to Charles Baskerville.

Chapter

3

The Problem

I confess at these words a shudder passed through me. There was a thrill in the doctor's voice which showed that he was himself deeply moved by that which he told us. Holmes leaned forward in his excitement and his eyes had the hard, dry glitter which shot from them when he was keenly interested.

"You saw this?"

"As clearly as I see you."

"And you said nothing?"

"What was the use?"

"How was it that no one else saw it?"

"The marks were some twenty yards from the body and no one gave them a thought. I don't suppose I should have done so had I not known this legend."

"There are many sheep-dogs on the moor?"

"No doubt, but this was no sheep-dog."

"You say it was large?"

"Enormous."

"But it had not approached the body?"

"No."

"What sort of night was it?"

"Damp and raw."

"But not actually raining?"

"No."

"What is the alley like?"

"There are two lines of old yew¹ hedge, twelve feet high and impenetrable. The walk in the centre is about eight feet across."

"Is there anything between the hedges and the walk?"

"Yes, there is a strip of grass about six feet broad on either side."

"I understand that the yew hedge is penetrated at one point by a gate?"

"Yes, the wicket-gate² which leads on to the moor."

"Is there any other opening?"

"None."

"So that to reach the yew alley one either has to come down it from the house or else to enter it by the moor-gate?"

"There is an exit through a summer-house at the far end."

"Had Sir Charles reached this?"

"No; he lay about fifty yards from it."

"Now, tell me, Dr. Mortimer — and this is important — the marks which you saw were on the path and not on the grass?"

"No marks could show on the grass."

"Were they on the same side of the path as the moor-gate?"

"Yes; they were on the edge of the path on the same side as the moor-gate."

"You interest me exceedingly. Another point. Was the wicket-gate closed?"

"Closed and padlocked."

1. an evergreen tree, 2. a small gate forming part of a larger gate

"How high was it?"

"About four feet high."

"Then anyone could have got over it?"

"Yes."

"And what marks did you see by the wicket-gate?"

"None in particular."

"Good heaven! Did no one examine?"

"Yes, I examined, myself."

"And found nothing?"

"It was all very confused. Sir Charles had evidently stood there for five or ten minutes."

"How do you know that?"

"Because the ash had twice dropped from his cigar."

"Excellent! This is a colleague, Watson, after our own heart. But the marks?"

"He had left his own marks all over that small patch of gravel. I could discern no others."

Sherlock Holmes struck his hand against his knee with an impatient gesture.

"If I had only been there!" he cried. "It is evidently a case of extraordinary interest, and one which presented immense opportunities to the scientific expert. That gravel page upon which I might have read so much has been long ere this smudged by the rain and defaced³ by the clogs⁴ of curious peasants. Oh, Dr. Mortimer, Dr. Mortimer, to think that you should not have called me in! You have indeed much to answer for."

"I could not call you in, Mr. Holmes, without disclosing these facts to the world, and I have already given my reasons for not wishing to do so. Besides, besides —"

3. disfigured or destroyed, 4. shoes or sandals with a thick sole of wood or cork etc.

"Why do you hesitate?"

"There is a realm in which the most acute and most experienced of detectives is helpless."

"You mean that the thing is supernatural?"

"I did not positively say so."

"No, but you evidently think it."

"Since the tragedy, Mr. Holmes, there have come to my ears several incidents which are hard to **reconcile**⁵ with the settled order of Nature."

"For example?"

"I find that before the terrible event occurred several people had seen a creature upon the moor which corresponds with this Baskerville demon, and which could not possibly be any animal known to science. They all agreed that it was a huge creature, luminous, ghastly, and **spectral**⁶. I have cross-examined these men, one of them a hard-headed countryman, one a **farrier**⁷, and one a moorland farmer, who all tell the same story of this dreadful apparition, exactly corresponding to the hell-hound of the legend. I assure you that there is a reign of terror in the district, and that it is a hardy man who will cross the moor at night."

"And you, a trained man of science, believe it to be supernatural?"

"I do not know what to believe."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why was Sherlock Holmes shuddered at the mention of the footprints of the hound?
2. Why did Sherlock Holmes ask the doctor numerous questions regarding few alley?

5. accept, 6. ghostly; phantom, 7. blacksmith

3. Who was appreciated by Sherlock Holmes by saying, "Excellent"?
 4. Why did Dr. Mortimer not call Mr. Sherlock Holmes instantly after exploring those gigantic footprints?
 5. What kind of thought dominated the doctor's mind regarding those footprints?
 6. What kind of picture regarding that fearful creature was presented by the three men who were reported to have seen it upon the moor?
-

Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "I have hitherto confined my investigations to this world," said he. "In a modest way I have combated evil, but to take on the Father of Evil himself would, perhaps, be too ambitious a task. Yet you must admit that the footmark is material."

"The original hound was material enough to tug a man's throat out, and yet he was **diabolical**⁸ as well."

"I see that you have quite gone over to the supernaturalists. But now, Dr. Mortimer, tell me this. If you hold these views why have you come to consult me at all? You tell me in the same breath that it is useless to investigate Sir Charles' death, and that you desire me to do it."

"I did not say that I desired you to do it."

"Then, how can I assist you?"

"By advising me as to what I should do with Sir Henry Baskerville, who arrives at Waterloo Station" — Dr. Mortimer looked at his watch — "in exactly one hour and a quarter."

"He being the heir?"

"Yes. On the death of Sir Charles we inquired for this young gentleman and found that he had been farming in Canada. From the accounts which have reached us he is an excellent fellow in every way. I speak now not as a medical man but as a trustee and executor of Sir Charles' will."

"There is no other claimant, I presume?"

"None. The only other kinsman whom we have been able to trace was Rodger Baskerville, the youngest of three brothers of whom poor Sir Charles was the elder. The second brother, who died young, is the father of this lad Henry. The third, Rodger, was the **black sheep**⁹ of the family. He came of the old masterful Baskerville strain and was the very image, they tell me, of the family picture of old Hugo. He made England too hot to hold him, fled to Central America, and died there in 1876 of yellow fever. Henry is the last of the Baskervilles. In one hour and five minutes I meet him at Waterloo Station. I have had a wire that he arrived at Southampton this morning. Now, Mr. Holmes, what would you advise me to do with him?"

"Why should he not go to the home of his fathers?"

"It seems natural, does it not? And yet, consider that every Baskerville who goes there meets with an evil fate. I feel sure that if Sir Charles could have spoken with me before his death he would have warned me against bringing this, the last of the old race, and the heir to great wealth, to that deadly place. And yet it cannot be denied that the prosperity of the whole poor, bleak countryside depends upon

9. a person who causes shame or embarrassment to his or her group or family

his presence. All the good work which has been done by Sir Charles will crash to the ground if there is no tenant of the Hall. I fear lest I should be swayed¹⁰ too much by my own obvious interest in the matter, and that is why I bring the case before you and ask for your advice."

Holmes considered for a little time.

"Put into plain words, the matter is this," said he. "In your opinion there is a diabolical agency which makes Dartmoor an unsafe abode for a Baskerville — that is your opinion?"

"At least I might go the length of saying that there is some evidence that this may be so."

"Exactly. But surely, if your supernatural theory be correct, it could work the young man evil in London as easily as in Devonshire. A devil with merely local powers like a parish vestry¹¹ would be too inconceivable a thing."

"You put the matter more flippantly¹², Mr. Holmes, than you would probably do if you were brought into personal contact with these things. Your advice, then, as I understand it, is that the young man will be as safe in Devonshire as in London. He comes in fifty minutes. What would you recommend?"

"I recommend, sir, that you take a cab, call off your spaniel who is scratching at my front door, and proceed to Waterloo to meet Sir Henry Baskerville."

"And then?"

"And then you will say nothing to him at all until I have made up my mind about the matter."

10. influenced, 11. a room connected with a church where sacred things are kept, 12. lightly; not seriously

"How long will it take you to make up your mind?"

"Twenty-four hours. At ten o'clock tomorrow, Dr. Mortimer, I will be much obliged to you if you will call upon me here, and it will be of help to me in my plans for the future if you will bring Sir Henry Baskerville with you."

"I will do so, Mr. Holmes." He scribbled the appointment on his shirt-cuff and hurried off in his strange, peering, absent-minded fashion. Holmes stopped him at the head of the stair.

"Only one more question, Dr. Mortimer. You say that before Sir Charles Baskerville's death several people saw this apparition¹³ upon the moor¹⁴?"

"Three people did."

"Did any see it after?"

"I have not heard of any."

"Thank you. Good-morning."

Holmes returned to his seat with that quiet look of inward satisfaction which meant that he had a congenial¹⁵ task before him.

"Going out, Watson?"

"Unless I can help you."

"No, my dear fellow, it is at the hour of action that I turn to you for aid. But this is splendid, really unique from some points of view. When you pass Bradley's, would you ask him to send up a pound of the strongest shag¹⁶ tobacco? Thank you. It would be as well if you could make it convenient not to return before evening. Then I should be very glad to

13. a ghostly appearance, 14. attract of open wasteland overgrown with heath, 15. pleasant, 16. a coarse tobacco cut into fine shreds

compare impressions as to this most interesting problem which has been submitted to us this morning."

I knew that seclusion and solitude were very necessary for my friend in those hours of intense mental concentration during which he weighed every particle of evidence, constructed alternative theories, balanced one against the other, and made up his mind as to which points were essential and which immaterial. I therefore spent the day at my club and did not return to Baker Street until evening. It was nearly nine o'clock when I found myself in the sitting-room once more.

My first impression as I opened the door was that a fire had broken out, for the room was so filled with smoke that the light of the lamp upon the table was blurred by it. As I entered, however, my fears were set at rest, for it was the **acrid**¹⁷ fumes of strong coarse tobacco which took me by the throat and set me coughing. Through the haze I had a vague vision of Holmes in his dressing-gown coiled up in an armchair with his black clay pipe between his lips. Several rolls of paper lay around him.

"Caught cold, Watson?" said he.

"No, it's this poisonous atmosphere."

"I suppose it is pretty thick, now that you mention it."

"Thick! It is intolerable."

"Open the window, then! You have been at your club all day, I perceive."

"My dear Holmes!"

"Am I right?"

17. creating to the eyes, nose etc.

"Certainly, but how?"

He laughed at my bewildered expression.

"There is a delightful freshness about you, Watson, which makes it a pleasure to exercise any small powers which I possess at your expense. A gentleman goes forth on a showery and miry¹⁸ day. He returns immaculate¹⁹ in the evening with the gloss still on his hat and his boots. He has been a fixture therefore all day. He is not a man with intimate friends. Where, then, could he have been? Is it not obvious?"

"Well, it is rather obvious."

"The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes. Where do you think that I have been?"

"A fixture also."

"On the contrary, I have been to Devonshire."

"In spirit?"

"Exactly. My body has remained in this armchair and has, I regret to observe, consumed in my absence two large pots of coffee and an incredible amount of tobacco. After you left I sent down to Stamford's for the Ordnance map of this portion of the moor, and my spirit has hovered²⁰ over it all day. I flatter myself that I could find my way about."

"A large-scale map, I presume?"

"Very large." He unrolled one section and held it over his knee. "Here you have the particular district which concerns us. That is Baskerville Hall in the middle."

"With a wood round it?"

"Exactly. I fancy the yew alley, though not marked

18. muddy, 19. spotlessly clean, 20. lingered; waited near at hand

under that name, must stretch along this line, with the moor, as you perceive, upon the right of it. This small clump of buildings here is the hamlet of Grimpen, where our friend Dr. Mortimer has his headquarters. Within a radius of five miles there are, as you see, only a very few scattered dwellings. Here is Lafter Hall, which was mentioned in the narrative. There is a house indicated here which may be the residence of the naturalist — Stapleton, if I remember right, was his name. Here are two moorland farmhouses, High Tor and Foulmire. Then fourteen miles away the great convict prison of Princetown. Between and around these scattered points extends the desolate, lifeless moor. This, then, is the stage upon which tragedy has been played, and upon which we may help to play it again."

"It must be a wild place."

"Yes, the setting is a worthy one. If the devil did desire to have a hand in the affairs of men —"

"Then you are yourself inclining to the supernatural explanation."

"The devil's agents may be of flesh and blood, may they not? There are two questions waiting for us at the outset. The one is whether any crime has been committed at all; the second is, what is the crime and how was it committed? Of course, if Dr. Mortimer's surmise should be correct, and we are dealing with forces outside the ordinary laws of Nature, there is an end of our investigation. But we are bound to exhaust all other hypotheses before falling back upon this one. I think we'll shut that window again, if you don't mind. It is a singular thing, but I find that a concentrated atmosphere helps a concentration of thought. I have not pushed it to the

length of getting into a box to think, but that is the logical outcome of my convictions. Have you turned the case over in your mind?"

"Yes, I have thought a good deal of it in the course of the day."

"What do you make of it?"

"It is very bewildering."

"It has certainly a character of its own. There are points of distinction about it. That change in the footprints, for example. What do you make of that?"

"Mortimer said that the man had walked on tiptoe down that portion of the alley."

"He only repeated what some fool had said at the inquest. Why should a man walk on tiptoe down the alley?"

"What then?"

"He was running, Watson — running desperately, running for his life, running until he burst his heart — and fell dead upon his face."

"Running from what?"

"There lies our problem. There are indications that the man was crazed with fear before ever he began to run."

"How can you say that?"

"I am presuming that the cause of his fears came to him across the moor. If that were so, and it seems most probable only a man who had lost his wits would have run from the house instead of towards it. If the gipsy's evidence may be taken as true, he ran with cries for help in the direction where help was least likely to be. Then, again, whom was he waiting for that night, and why was he waiting for him in the yew alley rather than in his own house?"

"You think that he was waiting for someone?"

"The man was elderly and **infirm**²¹. We can understand his taking an evening stroll, but the ground was damp and the night **inclement**²². Is it natural that he should stand for five or ten minutes, as Dr. Mortimer, with more practical sense than I should have given him credit for, deduced from the cigar ash?"

"But he went out every evening."

"I think it unlikely that he waited at the moor-gate every evening. On the contrary, the evidence is that he avoided the moor. That night he waited there. It was the night before he made his departure for London. The thing takes shape, Watson. It becomes **coherent**²³. Might I ask you to hand me my violin, and we will postpone all further thought upon this business until we have had the advantage of meeting Dr. Mortimer and Sir Henry Baskerville in the morning."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What sort of assistance did Dr. Mortimer expect from Mr. Holmes?
 2. In what capacity did Dr. Mortimer approach Mr. Sherlock Holmes to suggest him in the case?
 3. What is the prima-facie case, according to Dr. Mortimer, of Sir Charles' death?
 4. What is the central nexus between Sir Henry Baskerville's arriving at Waterloo station and Dr. Mortimer's restlessness?
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21. ailing; weak in health; sick or ill, 22. rough or stormy weather, 23. logically connected; meaningful

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

This chapter begins with Holmes having an elaborate questioning of Dr. Mortimer about the night of the death of Sir Charles. He asked questions such as the logistics of the few bridge, the shake of the footprints of both Sir Charles as well as the hound and other minute details. When Dr. Mortimer says that he believed Sir Charles must have stood at the bridge for about five to ten minutes, since he observed that the ash had dropped twice from his cigar, Holmes was glad and congratulated him on his acute observation. Holmes enquired if there was anyone who had seen the hound since the death of Sir Charles, Dr. Mortimer's reply was that three people had seen it before his death but no one had seen it after that.

Dr. Mortimer asked what he should do about Sir Henry Baskerville, who was due to arrive in about an hour's time. Sir Henry was the only heir and the last of Baskervilles. Holmes asked him to go ahead and meet Sir Henry...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Holmes questions Dr. Mortimer in greater detail about the setting.
2. The footprints of the hound had been found on the path, not on grass, and on the side of the moon but not approaching the body.
3. At the end of the alley is a summerhouse and the body had been found some fifty yards from it.
4. Holmes' rational mind is irritated by the doctor's apparent belief that the hound is supernatural. Mortimer is there only for advice on what to do with Henry Baskerville, the heir, who had arrived in England from Canada where he was farming.

5. Holmes asks Mortimer to return to next morning with Henry and he will tell them how to proceed.
6. Watson returns from the club to find Holmes looking over a large map of Devonshire. According to him there are two questions to be answered was there a crime committed and how was it done. He says that Sir Charles was waiting for someone at the gate. When he saw something so frightening that it drove him out to run in panic away from the house until his heart gave out.

EXERCISE

1. What suggestion did Mr. Holmes render to Dr. Mortimer about the reception of Sir Henry Baskerville at the waterloo station and why was he willing him to come along with Sir Henry next time?
2. What, according to Sherlock Holmes, were the two main questions to be addressed in the beginning of the case?
3. Why did Mr. Holmes consider that Sir Charles' death was the outcome of cardiac arrest and not due to any unnatural reason? Give your logic to support this theory.
4. Who was this man, in your opinion, whom Sir Charles waited on the night before departing to London?
5. What in your opinion, make the case meaningful to Mr. Sherlock Holmes? Put logic in support of your brilliant conjecture.

Character Sketches

1. Write down the character sketch of Sherlock Holmes as a clever detective?
2. Write down the character sketch of Dr. Mortimer.
3. Write down the pen-portrait of Sir Henry Baskerville.

Chapter

4

Sir Henry Baskerville

Our breakfast table was cleared early, and Holmes waited in his dressing-gown for the promised interview. Our clients were punctual to their appointment, for the clock had just struck ten when Dr. Mortimer was shown up, followed by the young **baronet**¹. The latter was a small, alert, dark-eyed man about thirty years of age, very **sturdily**² built, with thick black eyebrows and a strong, **pugnacious**³ face. He wore a ruddy-tinted tweed suit and had the weather-beaten appearance of one who has spent most of his time in the open air, and yet there was something in his steady eye and the quiet assurance of his bearing which indicated the gentleman.

"This is Sir Henry Baskerville," said Dr. Mortimer.

"Why, yes," said he, "and the strange thing is, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, that if my friend here had not proposed coming round to you this morning I should have come on my own account. I understand that you think out little puzzles, and I've had one this morning which wants more thinking out than I am able to give it."

"Pray take a seat, Sir Henry. Do I understand you to say that you have yourself had some remarkable experience since you arrived in London?"

1. a member of a British hereditary order of honour, 2. strong and robust, 3. quarrelsome

"Nothing of much importance, Mr. Holmes. Only a joke, as like as not. It was this letter, if you can call it a letter, which reached me this morning."

He laid an envelope upon the table, and we all bent over it. It was of common quality, grayish in colour. The address, "Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel," was printed in rough characters; the post-mark "Charing Cross," and the date of posting the preceding evening.

"Who knew that you were going to the Northumberland Hotel?" asked Holmes, glancing keenly across at our visitor.

"No one could have known. We only decided after I met Dr. Mortimer."

"But Dr. Mortimer was no doubt already stopping there?"

"No, I had been staying with a friend," said the doctor. "There was no possible indication that we intended to go to this hotel."

"Hum! Someone seems to be very deeply interested in your movements." Out of the envelope he took a half-sheet of foolscap paper folded into four. This he opened and spread flat upon the table. Across the middle of it a single sentence had been formed by the expedient of pasting printed words upon it. It ran:

As you value your life or your reason keep away from the moor.

The word "moor" only was printed in ink.

"Now," said Sir Henry Baskerville, "perhaps you will tell me, Mr. Holmes, what in thunder is the meaning of that, and who it is that takes so much interest in my affairs?"

"What do you make of it, Dr. Mortimer? You must

allow that there is nothing supernatural about this, at any rate?"

"No, sir, but it might very well come from someone who was convinced that the business is supernatural."

"What business?" asked Sir Henry sharply. "It seems to me that all you gentlemen know a great deal more than I do about my own affairs."

"You shall share our knowledge before you leave this room, Sir Henry. I promise you that," said Sherlock Holmes. "We will confine ourselves for the present with your permission to this very interesting document, which must have been put together and posted yesterday evening. Have you yesterday's Times, Watson?"

"It is here in the corner."

"Might I trouble you for it — the inside page, please, with the leading articles?" He glanced swiftly over it, running his eyes up and down the columns. "Capital article this on free trade. Permit me to give you an extract from it."

'You may be **cajoled**⁴ into imagining that your own special trade or your own industry will be encouraged by a protective tariff, but it stands to reason that such legislation must in the long run keep away wealth from the country, diminish the value of our imports, and lower the general conditions of life in this island.'

"What do you think of that, Watson?" cried Holmes in high glee, rubbing his hands together with satisfaction. "Don't you think that is an admirable sentiment?"

4. persuaded; waxed

Dr. Mortimer looked at Holmes with an air of professional interest, and Sir Henry Baskerville turned a pair of puzzled dark eyes upon me.

"I don't know much about the tariff and things of that kind," said he, "but it seems to me we've got a bit off the trail so far as that note is concerned."

"On the contrary, I think we are particularly hot upon the trail, Sir Henry. Watson here knows more about my methods than you do, but I fear that even he has not quite grasped the significance of this sentence."

"No, I confess that I see no connection."

"And yet, my dear Watson, there is so very close a connection that the one is extracted out of the other. 'You,' 'your,' 'your,' 'life,' 'reason,' 'value,' 'keep away,' 'from the.' Don't you see now whence these words have been taken?"

"By thunder, you're right! Well, if that isn't smart!" cried Sir Henry.

"If any possible doubt remained it is settled by the fact that 'keep away' and 'from the' are cut out in one piece."

"Well, now — so it is!"

"Really, Mr. Holmes, this exceeds anything which I could have imagined," said Dr. Mortimer, gazing at my friend in amazement. "I could understand anyone saying that the words were from a newspaper; but that you should name which, and add that it came from the leading article, is really one of the most remarkable things which I have ever known. How did you do it?"

"I presume, Doctor, that you could tell the skull of a negro from that of an Esquimau⁵?"

5. old spelling of Eskimo

"Most certainly."

"But how?"

"Because that is my special hobby. The differences are obvious. The supra-orbital crest, the facial angle, the maxillary⁶ curve, the —"

"But this is my special hobby, and the differences are equally obvious. There is as much difference to my eyes between the leaded bourgeois type of a Times article and the slovenly⁷ print of an evening half-penny paper as there could be between your negro and your Esquimau. The detection of types is one of the most elementary branches of knowledge to the special expert in crime, though I confess that once when I was very young I confused the Leeds Mercury with the Western Morning News. But a Times leader is entirely distinctive, and these words could have been taken from nothing else. As it was done yesterday the strong probability was that we should find the words in yesterday's issue."

"So far as I can follow you, then, Mr. Holmes," said Sir Henry Baskerville, "someone cut out this message with a scissors —"

"Nail-scissors," said Holmes. "You can see that it was a very short-bladed scissors, since the cutter had to take two snips over 'keep away.'"

"That is so. Someone, then, cut out the message with a pair of short-bladed scissors, pasted it with paste —"

"Gum," said Holmes.

"With gum on to the paper. But I want to know why the word 'moor' should have been written?"

"Because he could not find it in print. The other words were all simple and might be found in any issue, but 'moor' would be less common."

6. jawbone or jaw, 7. untidily or careless

"Why, of course, that would explain it. Have you read anything else in this message, Mr. Holmes?"

"There are one or two indications, and yet the utmost pains have been taken to remove all clues. The address, you observe is printed in rough characters. But the Times is a paper which is seldom found in any hands but those of the highly educated. We may take it, therefore, that the letter was composed by an educated man who wished to pose as an uneducated one, and his effort to conceal his own writing suggests that that writing might be known, or come to be known, by you. Again, you will observe that the words are not gummed on in an accurate line, but that some are much higher than others. 'Life,' for example is quite out of its proper place. That may point to carelessness or it may point to agitation and hurry upon the part of the cutter. On the whole I incline to the latter view, since the matter was evidently important, and it is unlikely that the composer of such a letter would be careless. If he were in a hurry it opens up the interesting question why he should be in a hurry, since any letter posted up to early morning would reach Sir Henry before he would leave his hotel. Did the composer fear an interruption — and from whom?"

"We are coming now rather into the region of guesswork," said Dr. Mortimer.

"Say, rather, into the region where we balance probabilities and choose the most likely. It is the scientific use of the imagination, but we have always some material basis on which to start our speculation. Now, you would call it a guess, no doubt, but I am almost certain that this address has been written in a hotel."

"How in the world can you say that?"

"If you examine it carefully you will see that both the pen and the ink have given the writer trouble. The pen has spluttered⁸ twice in a single word and has run dry three times in a short address, showing that there was very little ink in the bottle. Now, a private pen or ink-bottle is seldom allowed to be in such a state, and the combination of the two must be quite rare. But you know the hotel ink and the hotel pen, where it is rare to get anything else. Yes, I have very little hesitation in saying that could we examine the waste-paper baskets of the hotels around Charing Cross until we found the remains of the mutilated Times leader we could lay our hands straight upon the person who sent this singular message. Halloa! Halloa! What's this?"

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Sir Henry say to Sherlock Holmes that if his friend, Dr. Mortimer had not advised him for coming round to him, he would have come on his own account? What could be the possible reason for his coming to him?
 2. What did Sir Henry show to Sherlock Holmes with a feeling of amazement?
 3. What was that astonishing thing about that letter which had been marked for Sir Henry?
 4. Why did Sherlock Holmes suspect that the letter had been prepared using the words and phrases cut from the leading paper, Times?
 5. Why was the word 'moor' in the letter written in ink in lieu of the print formation like other printed letter of the sentence?
-

⁸. to fall in drops

He was carefully examining the foolscap, upon which the words were pasted, holding it only an inch or two from his eyes.

"Well?"

"Nothing," said he, throwing it down. "It is a blank half-sheet of paper, without even a water-mark upon it. I think we have drawn as much as we can from this curious letter; and now, Sir Henry, has anything else of interest happened to you since you have been in London?"

"Why, no, Mr. Holmes. I think not."

"You have not observed anyone follow or watch you?"

"I seem to have walked right into the thick of a dime⁹ novel," said our visitor. "Why in thunder should anyone follow or watch me?"

"We are coming to that. You have nothing else to report to us before we go into this matter?"

"Well, it depends upon what you think worth reporting."

"I think anything out of the ordinary routine of life well worth reporting."

Sir Henry smiled. "I don't know much of British life yet, for I have spent nearly all my time in the States and in Canada. But I hope that to lose one of your boots is not part of the ordinary routine of life over here."

"You have lost one of your boots?"

"My dear sir," cried Dr. Mortimer, "it is only mislaid. You will find it when you return to the hotel. What is the use of troubling Mr. Holmes with trifles of this kind?"

9. tenth part of a dollar, equal to 10 cents

"Well, he asked me for anything outside the ordinary routine."

"Exactly," said Holmes, "however foolish the incident may seem. You have lost one of your boots, you say?"

"Well, mislaid it, anyhow. I put them both outside my door last night, and there was only one in the morning. I could get no sense out of the chap who cleans them. The worst of it is that I only bought the pair last night in the Strand, and I have never had them on."

"If you have never worn them, why did you put them out to be cleaned?"

"They were tan boots and had never been varnished. That was why I put them out."

"Then I understand that on your arrival in London yesterday you went out at once and bought a pair of boots?"

"I did a good deal of shopping. Dr. Mortimer here went round with me. You see, if I am to be squire¹⁰ down there I must dress the part, and it may be that I have got a little careless in my ways out West. Among other things I bought these brown boots — gave six dollars for them — and had one stolen before ever I had them on my feet."

"It seems a singularly useless thing to steal," said Sherlock Holmes. "I confess that I share Dr. Mortimer's belief that it will not be long before the missing boot is found."

"And, now, gentlemen," said the baronet with decision, "it seems to me that I have spoken quite enough about the little that I know. It is time that you

10. a country gentleman

kept your promise and gave me a full account of what we are all driving at¹¹."

"Your request is a very reasonable one," Holmes answered. "Dr. Mortimer, I think you could not do better than to tell your story as you told it to us."

Thus encouraged, our scientific friend drew his papers from his pocket and presented the whole case as he had done upon the morning before. Sir Henry Baskerville listened with the deepest attention and with an occasional exclamation of surprise.

"Well, I seem to have come into an inheritance with a vengeance¹²," said he when the long narrative was finished. "Of course, I've heard of the hound ever since I was in the nursery. It's the pet story of the family, though I never thought of taking it seriously before. But as to my uncle's death — well, it all seems boiling up in my head, and I can't get it clear yet. You don't seem quite to have made up your mind whether it's a case for a policeman or a clergyman."

"Precisely."

"And now there's this affair of the letter to me at the hotel. I suppose that fits into its place."

"It seems to show that someone knows more than we do about what goes on upon the moor," said Dr. Mortimer.

"And also," said Holmes, "that someone is not ill-disposed¹³ towards you, since they warn you of danger."

"Or it may be that they wish, for their own purposes, to scare me away."

"Well, of course, that is possible also. I am very much indebted to you, Dr. Mortimer, for introducing

11. suggesting; trying to convey, 12. with force; to a surprising degree,

13. unfriendly or unsympathetic

me to a problem which presents several interesting alternatives. But the practical point which we now have to decide, Sir Henry, is whether it is or is not advisable for you to go to Baskerville Hall."

"Why should I not go?"

"There seems to be danger."

"Do you mean danger from this family fiend¹⁴ or do you mean danger from human beings?"

"Well, that is what we have to find out."

"Whichever it is, my answer is fixed. There is no devil in hell, Mr. Holmes, and there is no man upon earth who can prevent me from going to the home of my own people, and you may take that to be my final answer." His dark brows knitted¹⁵ and his face flushed to a dusky red as he spoke. It was evident that the fiery temper of the Baskervilles was not extinct in this their last representative. "Meanwhile," said he, "I have hardly had time to think over all that you have told me. It's a big thing for a man to have to understand and to decide at one sitting. I should like to have a quiet hour by myself to make up my mind. Now, look here, Mr. Holmes, it's half-past eleven now and I am going back right away to my hotel. Suppose you and your friend, Dr. Watson, come round and lunch with us at two. I'll be able to tell you more clearly than how this thing strikes me."

"Is that convenient to you, Watson?"

"Perfectly."

"Then you may expect us. Shall I have a cab called?"

14. evil spirit; demon, 15. contracted into folds or wrinkles; as the brow

"I'd prefer to walk, for this affair has flurried¹⁶ me rather."

"I'll join you in a walk, with pleasure," said his companion.

"Then we meet again at two o'clock. *Au revoir*¹⁷, and good-morning!"

We heard the steps of our visitors descend the stair and the bang of the front door. In an instant Holmes had changed from the languid¹⁸ dreamer to the man of action.

"Your hat and boots, Watson, quick! Not a moment to lose!" He rushed into his room in his dressing-gown and was back again in a few seconds in a frock-coat. We hurried together down the stairs and into the street. Dr. Mortimer and Baskerville were still visible about two hundred yards ahead of us in the direction of Oxford Street.

"Shall I run on and stop them?"

"Not for the world, my dear Watson. I am perfectly satisfied with your company if you will tolerate mine. Our friends are wise, for it is certainly a very fine morning for a walk."

He quickened his pace until we had decreased the distance which divided us by about half. Then still keeping a hundred yards behind, we followed into Oxford Street and so down Regent Street. Once our friends stopped and stared into a shop window, upon which Holmes did the same. An instant afterwards he gave a little cry of satisfaction, and, following the direction of his eager eyes, I saw that a hansom cab¹⁹ with a man inside which had halted

16. confusion or agitation, 17. good bye for the present; until we meet again, 18. indifferent; slow, 19. a horse-drawn vehicle

on the other side of the street was now proceeding slowly onward again.

"There's our man, Watson! Come along! We'll have a good look at him, if we can do no more."

At that instant I was aware of a bushy black beard and a pair of piercing eyes turned upon us through the side window of the cab. Instantly the trapdoor at the top flew up, something was screamed to the driver, and the cab flew madly off down Regent Street. Holmes looked eagerly round for another, but no-empty one was in sight. Then he dashed in wild pursuit amid the stream of the traffic, but the start was too great, and already the cab was out of sight.

"There now!" said Holmes bitterly as he emerged panting and white with vexation²⁰ from the tide of vehicles. "Was ever such bad luck and such bad management, too? Watson, Watson, if you are an honest man you will record this also and set it against my successes!"

"Who was the man?"

"I have not an idea."

"A spy?"

"Well, it was evident from what we have heard that Baskerville has been very closely shadowed by someone since he has been in town. How else could it be known so quickly that it was the Northumberland Hotel which he had chosen? If they had followed him the first day I argued that they would follow him also the second. You may have observed that I twice strolled over to the window while Dr. Mortimer was reading his legend."

"Yes, I remember."

20. irritation; annoyance

"I was looking out for loiterers in the street, but I saw none. We are dealing with a clever man, Watson. This matter cuts very deep, and though I have not finally made up my mind whether it is a benevolent or a malevolent²¹ agency which is in touch with us, I am conscious always of power and design. When our friends left I at once followed them in the hopes of marking down their invisible attendant. So wily²² was he that he had not trusted himself upon foot, but he had availed himself of a cab so that he could loiter behind or dash past them and so escape their notice. His method had the additional advantage that if they were to take a cab he was all ready to follow them. It has, however, one obvious disadvantage."

"It puts him in the power of the cabman."

"Exactly."

"What a pity we did not get the number!"

"My dear Watson, clumsy as I have been, you surely do not seriously imagine that I neglected to get the number? No. 2704 is our man. But that is no use to us for the moment."

"I fail to see how you could have done more."

"On observing the cab I should have instantly turned and walked in the other direction. I should then at my leisure have hired a second cab and followed the first at a respectful distance, or, better still, have driven to the Northumberland Hotel and waited there. When our unknown had followed Baskerville home we should have had the opportunity of playing his own game upon himself and seeing where he made for. As it is, by an indiscreet²³ eagerness, which was taken advantage of with

21. unkind; spiteful, 22. cunning; crafty, 23. not careful; careless

extraordinary quickness and energy by our opponent, we have betrayed ourselves and lost our man."

We had been **sauntering**²⁴ slowly down Regent Street during this conversation, and Dr. Mortimer, with his companion, had long vanished in front of us.

"There is no object in our following them," said Holmes. "The shadow has departed and will not return. We must see what further cards we have in our hands and play them with decision. Could you swear to that man's face within the cab?"

"I could swear only to the beard."

"And so could I — from which I gather that in all probability it was a false one. A clever man upon so delicate an errand has no use for a beard save to conceal his features. Come in here, Watson!"

He turned into one of the district messenger offices, where he was warmly greeted by the manager.

"Ah, Wilson, I see you have not forgotten the little case in which I had the good fortune to help you?"

"No, sir, indeed I have not. You saved my good name, and perhaps my life."

"My dear fellow, you exaggerate. I have some recollection, Wilson, that you had among your boys a lad named Cartwright, who showed some ability during the investigation."

"Yes, sir, he is still with us."

"Could you ring him up? — thank you! And I should be glad to have change of this five-pound note."

A lad of fourteen, with a bright, keen face, had obeyed the **summons**²⁵ of the manager. He stood now gazing with great reverence at the famous detective.

"Let me have the Hotel Directory," said Holmes. "Thank you! Now, Cartwright, there are the names

24. strolling; walking slowly in a relaxed manner, 25. command

of twenty-three hotels here, all in the immediate neighbourhood of Charing Cross. Do you see?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will visit each of these in turn."

"Yes, sir."

"You will begin in each case by giving the outside porter one shilling. Here are twenty-three shillings."

"Yes, sir."

"You will tell him that you want to see the waste-paper of yesterday. You will say that an important telegram has miscarried and that you are looking for it. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"But what you are really looking for is the centre page of the Times with some holes cut in it with scissors. Here is a copy of the Times. It is this page. You could easily recognize it, could you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"In each case the outside porter will send for the hall porter, to whom also you will give a shilling. Here are twenty-three shillings. You will then learn in possibly twenty cases out of the twenty-three that the waste of the day before has been burned or removed. In the three other cases you will be shown a heap of paper and you will look for this page of the Times among it. The odds are enormously²⁶ against your finding it. There are ten shillings over in case of emergencies. Let me have a report by wire at Baker Street before evening. And now, Watson, it only remains for us to find out by wire the identity of the cabman, No. 2704, and then we will drop into one of the Bond Street picture galleries and the time until we are due at the hotel."

26. vastly; hugely

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What kind of incident did Sir Henry share with Sherlock Holmes at his insistence? Was it silly? Give reasons.
 2. What did Sherlock Holmes advise to Sir Henry about his going to Baskerville Hall and what response did he get?
 3. Why did Sherlock Holmes take decision to follow Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer soon after they left their place at commitment to see them over lunch at two?
 4. Why could the two detectives, Sherlock Holmes and his colleague, Dr. Watson not succeed to follow the stranger in the cab much against their desire?
 5. Who was the man in the cab who ran away by frustrating the design of Holmes and Watson?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

This chapter shows that Dr. Mortimer had returned to 221B, Baker Street with Sir Henry Baskerville, Sir Henry showed Holmes a different kind of letter he had received that morning addressed to him at his hotel in a very funny, sloppy hand. The content was, "As you value your life or your reason keep away from moor." All the words had been cut from a newspaper except for the word "moor" which was written in ink.

Sherlock Holmes was able to locate the exact article in the 'London Times' from which the letter writer had cut the words for his message. He also deduced that the writer must have used hotel ink nail scissors to cut the article. Since the 'Times' was read by educated people, Holmes considered the writer to be an educated person trying to hide his intelligence with untidy and sloppy

writing. Holmes enquired of Sir Henry if he thought he was being followed or if anything out of the ordinary had occurred...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Dr. Mortimer arrives very much on time with Sir Henry who had an air a gentleman about him.
2. Even before hearing of the legend, the Baronet is already feeling disturbed by the arrival of a note warning him not to go to the moor.
3. Holmes is very much able to identify that the cut outwards in the note are from the previous day's 'Times' newspaper.
4. Holmes also infers from the message that it is an educated person in a hurry to avoid any interruption.
5. The written portion, the address along with the word 'moor', being difficult to find in print indicate that the person is attempting to disguise the handwriting since it is or will be familiar and that the message was composed in a hotel.
6. Sir Henry reports on the disappearance of one of his tan boots which had been set outside his room to be varnished.
7. Sir Henry wants to know what all is going on and Dr. Mortimer tells him about the legend. Henry is insistent on going to the Hall. He requests a meeting at his hotel at 2:00 that afternoon.
8. The doctor and the baronet leave for the hotel on foot while Holmes and Watson begin following them.
9. Very quickly they notice a cab to be following the pair but the passenger with a fake black beard notices them at the same time and the cab takes off.

10. They are unable to pursue the cab but somehow the detective did at least get the cab no. 2704.
11. Holmes and Watson employ Cartwright, a young boy to go about to the twenty-three hotels in the area and bribe the employees so that he can look through the waste paper in order to find a cut up copy of the 'Times'.

EXERCISE

1. Why did Sherlock Holmes regret after missing the stranger in the cab? Support your answer with suitable logic.
2. What made Holmes suspect that Sir Henry Baskerville was closely overshadowed by some other ever since he stepped in London?
3. What could be the purpose, according to you, behind stealing only one shoe of Sir Henry's new pair of shoes? Justify your conjecture with suitable reasons?
4. Why did Sherlock Holmes desire Cartwright to go to the earmarked twenty-three hotels and find out the waste-paper baskets of those hotels?
5. 'Money makes the mare go.' In the light of this adage, narrate what made Mr. Holmes give the change of five pound to Cartwright. Do you consider it must have fulfilled the purpose for which it was handed over to him?

Character-Sketches

1. Write a brief character-sketch of Sir Henry Baskerville in the light of incidents took place in this chapter.
2. Write the characteristic features of the stranger in the cab.
3. Draw a character sketch of Mr. Watson, the manager of one of the District Messenger Offices.

Chapter 5

Three Broken Threads

Sherlock Holmes had, in a very remarkable degree, the power of detaching his mind at will. For two hours the strange business in which we had been involved appeared to be forgotten, and he was entirely absorbed in the pictures of the modern Belgian masters. He would talk of nothing but art, of which he had the crudest¹ ideas, from our leaving the gallery until we found ourselves at the Northumberland Hotel.

"Sir Henry Baskerville is upstairs expecting you," said the clerk. "He asked me to show you up at once when you came."

"Have you any objection to my looking at your register?" said Holmes.

"Not in the least."

The book showed that two names had been added after that of Baskerville. One was Theophilus Johnson and family, of Newcastle; the other Mrs. Oldmore and maid, of High Lodge, Alton.

"Surely that must be the same Johnson whom I used to know," said Holmes to the porter. "A lawyer is he not, gray-headed, and walks with a limp?"

"No, sir, this is Mr. Johnson, the coal-owner, a very active gentleman, not older than yourself."

1. most basic

"Surely you are mistaken about his trade?"

"No, sir! he has used this hotel for many years, and he is very well known to us."

"Ah, that settles it. Mrs. Oldmore, too; I seem to remember the name. Excuse my curiosity, but often in calling upon one friend one finds another."

"She is an invalid lady, sir. Her husband was once mayor of Gloucester. She always comes to us when she is in town."

"Thank you; I am afraid I cannot claim her acquaintance. We have established a most important fact by these questions, Watson," he continued in a low voice as we went upstairs together. "We know now that the people who are so interested in our friend have not settled down in his own hotel. That means that while they are, as we have seen, very anxious to watch him, they are equally anxious that he should not see them. Now, this is a most suggestive fact."

"What does it suggest?"

"It suggests — halloa, my dear fellow, what on earth is the matter?"

As we came round the top of the stairs we had run up against Sir Henry Baskerville himself. His face was flushed with anger, and he held an old and dusty boot in one of his hands. So furious was he that he was hardly articulate², and when he did speak it was in a much broader and more Western dialect than any which we had heard from him in the morning.

"Seems to me they are playing me for a sucker in this hotel," he cried. "They'll find they've started in to monkey with the wrong man unless they are

2. clear in speech

careful. By thunder, if that chap can't find my missing boot there will be trouble. I can take a joke with the best, Mr. Holmes, but they've got a bit over the mark this time."

"Still looking for your boot?"

"Yes, sir, and mean to find it."

"But, surely, you said that it was a new brown boot?"

"So it was, sir. And now it's an old black one."

"What! you don't mean to say?"

"That's just what I do mean to say. I only had three pairs in the world — the new brown, the old black, and the patent leathers, which I am wearing. Last night they took one of my brown ones, and today they have sneaked one of the black. Well, have you got it? Speak out, man, and don't stand staring!"

An agitated German waiter had appeared upon the scene.

"No, sir; I have made inquiry all over the hotel, but I can hear no word of it."

"Well, either that boot comes back before sundown or I'll see the manager and tell him that I go right straight out of this hotel."

"It shall be found, sir — I promise you that if you will have a little patience it will be found."

"Mind it is, for it's the last thing of mine that I'll lose in this den of thieves. Well, well, Mr. Holmes, you'll excuse my troubling you about such a trifle³ —"

"I think it's well worth troubling about."

"Why, you look very serious over it."

"How do you explain it?"

3. small or insignificant matter

"I just don't attempt to explain it. It seems the very maddest, queerest thing that ever happened to me."

"The queerest perhaps —" said Holmes thoughtfully.

"What do you make of it yourself?"

"Well, I don't profess to understand it yet. This case of yours is very complex, Sir Henry. When taken in conjunction⁴ with your uncle's death I am not sure that of all the five hundred cases of capital importance which I have handled there is one which cuts so deep. But we hold several threads in our hands, and the odds are that one or other of them guides us to the truth. We may waste time in following the wrong one, but sooner or later we must come upon the right."

We had a pleasant luncheon in which little was said of the business which had brought us together. It was in the private sitting-room to which we afterwards repaired that Holmes asked Baskerville what were his intentions.

"To go to Baskerville Hall."

"And when?"

"At the end of the week."

"On the whole," said Holmes, "I think that your decision is a wise one. I have ample evidence that you are being **dogged**⁵ in London, and amid the millions of this great city it is difficult to discover who these people are or what their object can be. If their intentions are evil they might do you a mischief, and we should be powerless to prevent it. You did not know, Dr. Mortimer, that you were followed this morning from my house?"

4. together with; in combination, 5. followed or tracked, as by a dog

Dr. Mortimer started⁶ violently. "Followed! By whom?"

"That, unfortunately, is what I cannot tell you. Have you among your neighbours or acquaintances on Dartmoor any man with a black, full beard?"

"No — or, let me see — why, yes. Barrymore, Sir Charles' butler, is a man with a full, black beard."

"Ha! Where is Barrymore?"

"He is in charge of the Hall."

"We had best ascertain⁷ if he is really there, or if by any possibility he might be in London."

"How can you do that?"

"Give me a telegraph form. 'Is all ready for Sir Henry?' That will do. Address to Mr. Barrymore, Baskerville Hall. What is the nearest telegraph-office? Grimpen. Very good, we will send a second wire to the postmaster, Grimpen: 'Telegram to Mr. Barrymore to be delivered into his own hand. If absent, please return wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel.' That should let us know before evening whether Barrymore is at his post in Devonshire or not."

"That's so," said Baskerville. "By the way, Dr. Mortimer, who is this Barrymore, anyhow?"

"He is the son of the old caretaker, who is dead. They have looked after the Hall for four generations now. So far as I know, he and his wife are as respectable a couple as any in the county."

"At the same time," said Baskerville, "it's clear enough that so long as there are none of the family

6. gave a sudden jump or jerk, as from a shock of surprise or shock
7. make sure

at the Hall these people have a mighty fine home and nothing to do."

"That is true."

"Did Barrymore profit at all by Sir Charles' will?" asked Holmes.

"He and his wife had five hundred pounds each."

"Ha! Did they know that they would receive this?"

"Yes; Sir Charles was very fond of talking about the **provisions**⁸ of his will."

"That is very interesting."

"I hope," said Dr. Mortimer, "that you do not look with suspicious eyes upon everyone who received a **legacy**⁹ from Sir Charles, for I also had a thousand pounds left to me."

"Indeed! And anyone else?"

"There were many insignificant sums to individuals, and a large number of public charities. The **residue**¹⁰ all went to Sir Henry."

"And how much was the residue?"

"Seven hundred and forty thousand pounds."

Holmes raised his eyebrows in surprise. "I had no idea that so **gigantic**¹¹ a sum was involved," said he.

"Sir Charles had the reputation of being rich, but we did not know how very rich he was until we came to examine his securities. The total value of the estate was close on to a million."

"Dear me! It is a **stake**¹² for which a man might well play a desperate game. And one more question, Dr. Mortimer. Supposing that anything happened to

8. a clause providing for a particular matter, 9. a gift of property or money by a will, 10. the remainder, 11. very large; huge, 12. a share or claim; prize

our young friend here — you will forgive the unpleasant hypothesis! — who would inherit the estate?"

"Since Rodger Baskerville, Sir Charles' younger brother died unmarried, the estate would descend to the Desmonds, who are distant cousins. James Desmond is an elderly clergyman in Westmoreland."

"Thank you. These details are all of great interest. Have you met Mr. James Desmond?"

"Yes; he once came down to visit Sir Charles. He is a man of **venerable**¹³ appearance and of saintly life. I remember that he refused to accept any settlement from Sir Charles, though he pressed it upon him."

"And this man of simple tastes would be the heir to Sir Charles' thousands."

"He would be the heir to the estate because that is entailed. He would also be the heir to the money unless it were willed otherwise by the present owner, who can, of course, do what he likes with it."

"And have you made your will, Sir Henry?"

"No, Mr. Holmes, I have not. I've had no time, for it was only yesterday that I learned how matters stood. But in any case I feel that the money should go with the title and estate. That was my poor uncle's idea. How is the owner going to restore the glories of the Baskervilles if he has not money enough to keep up the property? House, land, and dollars must go together."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What was the reason of checking the register of the people by Sherlock Holmes who had checked in the hotel?

13. respected and dignified

2. What deduction did Mr. Holmes extracted from this exercise?
 3. What was the change that Sherlock Holmes noticed in the accent of Sir Henry Baskerville?
 4. What made Mr. Holmes ask Dr. Mortimer if he had amongst his neighbours or acquaintances with a full black beard?
 5. What made Holmes ask Dr. Mortimer if Barrymore would benefit from Sir Charles' will?
 6. What made Sherlock Holmes feel surprised when he was communicated regarding the value of the residue property of Sir Charles Baskerville by Dr. Mortimer?
-

"Quite so. Well, Sir Henry, I am of one mind¹⁴ with you as to the advisability of your going down to Devonshire without delay. There is only one provision which I must make. You certainly must not go alone."

"Dr. Mortimer returns with me."

"But Dr. Mortimer has his practice to attend to, and his house is miles away from yours. With all the good will in the world he may be unable to help you. No, Sir Henry, you must take with you someone, a trusty man, who will be always by your side."

"Is it possible that you could come yourself, Mr. Holmes?"

"If matters came to a crisis I should endeavour¹⁵ to be present in person; but you can understand that, with my extensive consulting practice and with the constant appeals which reach me from many quarters, it is impossible for me to be absent from London for an indefinite time. At the present instant one of the most revered names in England is being besmirched¹⁶ by a blackmailer, and only I can stop

14. in agreement, 15. make an effort; try to, 16. sailed; to detract from the honour of

a disastrous scandal. You will see how impossible it is for me to go to Dartmoor."

"Whom would you recommend, then?"

Holmes laid his hand upon my arm. "If my friend would undertake it there is no man who is better worth having at your side when you are in a tight place. No one can say so more confidently than I."

The proposition took me completely by surprise, but before I had time to answer, Baskerville seized me by the hand and wrung it heartily.

"Well, now, that is real kind of you, Dr. Watson," said he. "You see how it is with me, and you know just as much about the matter as I do. If you will come down to Baskerville Hall and see me through I'll never forget it."

The promise of adventure had always a fascination for me, and I was complimented by the words of Holmes and by the eagerness with which the baronet hailed me as a companion.

"I will come, with pleasure," said I. "I do not know how I could employ my time better."

"And you will report very carefully to me," said Holmes. "When a crisis comes, as it will do, I will direct how you shall act. I suppose that by Saturday all might be ready?"

"Would that suit Dr. Watson?"

"Perfectly."

"Then on Saturday, unless you hear to the contrary, we shall meet at the ten-thirty train from Paddington."

We had risen to depart when Baskerville gave a cry, of triumph, and diving into one of the corners of the room he drew a brown boot from under a cabinet.

"My missing boot!" he cried.

"May all our difficulties vanish as easily!" said Sherlock Holmes.

"But it is a very, singular thing," Dr. Mortimer remarked. "I searched this room carefully before lunch."

"And so did I," said Baskerville. "Every, inch of it."

"There was certainly no boot in it then."

"In that case the waiter must have placed it there while we were lunching."

The German was sent for but **professed**¹⁷ to know nothing of the matter, nor could any inquiry, clear it up. Another item had been added to that constant and apparently purposeless series of small mysteries which had succeeded each other so rapidly. Setting aside the whole **grim**¹⁸ story, of Sir Charles' death, we had a line of **inexplicable**¹⁹ incidents all within the limits of two days, which included the receipt of the printed letter, the black-bearded spy in the hansom, the loss of the new brown boot, the loss of the old black boot, and now the return of the new brown boot. Holmes sat in silence in the cab as we drove back to Baker Street, and I knew from his drawn brows and keen face that his mind, like my own, was busy in endeavouring to frame some scheme into which all these strange and apparently disconnected episodes could be fitted. All afternoon and late into the evening he sat lost in tobacco and thought.

Just before dinner two telegrams were handed in. The first ran:

Have just heard that Barrymore is at the Hall.

BASKERVILLE.

17. pretended; claimed; often falsely, 18. gloomy; terrible, 19. puzzling; unexplainable

The second:

Visited twenty-three hotels as directed, but sorry, to report unable to trace cut sheet of Times.

CARTWRIGHT.

"There go two of my threads, Watson. There is nothing more stimulating than a case where everything goes against you. We must cast round for another scent."

"We have still the cabman who drove the spy."

"Exactly. I have wired to get his name and address from the Official Registry. I should not be surprised if this were an answer to my question."

The ring at the bell proved to be something even more satisfactory than an answer, however, for the door opened and a rough-looking fellow entered who was evidently the man himself.

"I got a message from the head office that a gent at this address had been inquiring for No. 2704," said he. "I've driven my cab this seven years and never a word of complaint. I came here straight from the Yard to ask you to your face what you had against me."

"I have nothing in the world against you, my good man," said Holmes. "On the contrary, I have half a sovereign for you if you will give me a clear answer to my questions."

"Well, I've had a good day and no mistake," said the cabman with a grin. "What was it you wanted to ask, sir?"

"First of all your name and address, in case I want you again."

"John Clayton, 3 Turpey Street, the Borough. My cab is out of Shipley's Yard, near Waterloo Station." Sherlock Holmes made a note of it.

"Now, Clayton, tell me all about the fare who came and watched this house at ten o'clock this morning and afterwards followed the two gentlemen down Regent Street."

The man looked surprised and a little embarrassed. "Why there's no good my telling you things, for you seem to know as much as I do already," said he. "The truth is that the gentleman told me that he was a detective and that I was to say nothing about him to anyone."

"My good fellow; this is a very serious business, and you may find yourself in a pretty bad position if you try to hide anything from me. You say that your fare told you that he was a detective?"

"Yes, he did."

"When did he say this?"

"When he left me."

"Did he say anything more?"

"He mentioned his name."

Holmes cast a swift glance of triumph at me. "Oh, he mentioned his name, did he? That was imprudent²⁰. What was the name that he mentioned?"

"His name," said the cabman, "was Mr. Sherlock Holmes."

Never have I seen my friend more completely taken aback than by the cabman's reply. For an instant he sat in silent amazement. Then he burst into a hearty laugh.

"A touch, Watson — an undeniable touch!" said he. "I feel a foil as quick and supple²¹ as my own. He got home upon me very prettily that time. So his name was Sherlock Holmes, was it?"

20. careless; foolhardy, 21. clever

"Yes, sir, that was the gentleman's name."

"Excellent! Tell me where you picked him up and all that occurred."

"He hailed me at half-past nine in Trafalgar Square. He said that he was a detective, and he offered me two guineas if I would do exactly what he wanted all day and ask no questions. I was glad enough to agree. First we drove down to the Northumberland Hotel and waited there until two gentlemen came out and took a cab from the rank. We followed their cab until it pulled up somewhere near here."

"This very door," said Holmes.

"Well, I couldn't be sure of that, but I dare say my fare knew all about it. We pulled up halfway down the street and waited an hour and a half. Then the two gentlemen passed us, walking, and we followed down Baker Street and along —"

"I know," said Holmes.

"Until we got three-quarters down Regent Street. Then my gentleman threw up the trap, and he cried that I should drive right away to Waterloo Station as hard as I could go. I whipped up the mare and we were there under the ten minutes. Then he paid up his two guineas, like a good one, and away he went into the station. Only just as he was leaving he turned round and he said: 'It might interest you to know that you have been driving Mr. Sherlock Holmes.' That's how I come to know the name."

"I see. And you saw no more of him?"

"Not after he went into the station."

"And how would you describe Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

The cabman scratched his head. "Well, he wasn't altogether such an easy gentleman to describe. I'd

put him at forty years of age, and he was of a middle height, two or three inches shorter than you, sir. He was dressed like a toff²², and he had a black beard, cut square at the end, and a pale face. I don't know as I could say more than that."

"Colour of his eyes?"

"No, I can't say that."

"Nothing more that you can remember?"

"No, sir; nothing."

"Well, then, here is your half-sovereign. There's another one waiting for you if you can bring any more information. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir, and thank you!"

John Clayton departed chuckling²³, and Holmes turned to me with a shrug of his shoulders and a rueful²⁴ smile.

"Snap goes our third thread, and we end where we began," said he. "The cunning rascal! He knew our number, knew that Sir Henry Baskerville had consulted me, spotted who I was in Regent Street, conjectured²⁵ that I had got the number of the cab and would lay my hands on the driver, and so sent back this audacious message. I tell you, Watson, this time we have got a foeman²⁶ who is worthy of our steel. I've been checkmated in London. I can only wish you better luck in Devonshire. But I'm not easy in my mind about it."

"About what?"

"About sending you. It's an ugly business, Watson, an ugly dangerous business, and the more I see of it the less I like it. Yes my dear fellow, you may laugh,

22. a stylishly dressed, fashionable person, 23. laughing softly, usually with satisfaction, 24. regretful; feeling sorry, 25. guessed; presumed, 26. an enemy in war

but I give you my word that I shall be very glad to have you back safe and sound in Baker Street once more."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why could Holmes not take Sir Henry Baskerville Hall with just Dr. Mortimer in spite of his being the trustee of Sir Charles' property?
 2. Whom did Holmes recommend to visit to Baskerville Hall along with Sir Henry?
 3. How did Holmes and Watson succeed in getting hold of the cabman who drove the spy?
 4. How did Holmes allure the cabman into unearthing the truths of the spy who had outwitted him shortly?
-

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

It was Holmes and Dr. Watson who spent time looking at an art exhibit and then they went to the hotel. Holmes very clearly get the hotel register to talk about two guests so that he could eliminate them as persons who might have been following Sir Henry.

The three men met him in the hotel room of Sir Henry, who was upset because yet another boot was missing. Someone had already taken one brown and now one black boot. After lunch Sir Henry repeated his intention of going to Baskerville Hall. Holmes commented that someone was following him. Since the servant Barrymore had a full beard, Holmes decided to send him a telegram and demanded an instant reply so that he could make out if Barrymore was at Baskerville Hall or following Sir Henry in London.

Holmes next found out that Sir Henry was due to inherit close to a million pounds and if he died the estate would pass on to...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Holmes checks the register upon arriving at the Northumberland Hotel.
2. Two guests had signed in after Sir Henry but it is clear that neither could be suspected of writing the note or being the follower.
3. The person must be someone recognizable.
4. Henry is seen quite flustered and attempting to reuse the staff into action.
5. Another of his shoes, and odd black one, has gone missing.
6. For Holmes, the matter has now become of concern and the discovery of the original missing boot does not solve the curiosity.
7. It is revealed at the meeting that Barrymore the servant has a beard and so could possibly be the man spotted in the cab.
8. He also has a motive since keeping the building vacant means a comfortable and workfree life.
9. Sir Henry's inheritance is reported to be 740,000 pounds. The money that could certainly tempt people to seedy behaviour.
10. However, the only heir after Sir Henry is James Desmond, a man of 'simple taste and saintly life'.
11. Holmes agrees with Sir Henry's decision to go to the Hall, but also insists that will not be able to go with him.
12. Watson is recommended, who, with his flattery and adventurousness readily agrees.

13. Back at home, Holmes receives two telegrams that evening.
14. The one by Sir Henry informs him of Barrymore's presence at the Hall. The other from Cartright reports that he was unable to find the cut up "Times".
15. The cabman John Clayton arrives at the door and describes his mysterious passenger as about 40 years old of middle height and pale faced a fairly accurate account.
16. To Holmes' shock and thrill, the man had reported his name to be Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

EXERCISE

1. What kind of information was given regarding the spy to Holmes and Watson by the cabman?
2. What made the cabman come on his own to meet Holmes? What kind of fear was there in his mind?
3. What made you think that the spy should have directed the cabman to drive as fast as he could to the Waterloo station?
4. The disclosure of the identification truth of the spy by the cabman provides some clue to the readers regarding the man that Holmes and Watson were looking for. What do you think out of it? Conclude what is to happen now in the case of Sir Charles' unnatural death and Sir Henry's receiving that strange letter in the hotel of his stay?
5. What made Sherlock Holmes sound a bit anxious regarding the safety to Dr. Watson while wishing him all the best at the time of his staying at Baskerville Hall with Sir Henry Baskerville?

Character-Sketches

1. Write the character-sketch of the spy who was shadowing Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer after Henry Baskerville's arrival in London.
2. Draw a character-sketch of Sir Henry Baskerville in the light of your deduction from the incidents that took place in this chapter.
3. Write the character-sketch of Sherlock Holmes underlining the new characteristics of his mind you have come across in this chapter.

Chapter 6

Baskerville Hall

Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr. Mortimer were ready upon the appointed day, and we started as arranged for Devonshire. Mr. Sherlock Holmes drove with me to the station and gave me his last parting **injunctions**¹ and advice.

"I will not bias your mind by suggesting theories or suspicions, Watson," said he; "I wish you simply to report facts in the fullest possible manner to me, and you can leave me to do the theorizing."

"What sort of facts?" I asked.

"Anything which may seem to have a bearing however indirect upon the case, and especially the relations between young Baskerville and his neighbours or any fresh particulars concerning the death of Sir Charles. I have made some inquiries myself in the last few days, but the results have, I fear, been negative. One thing only appears to be certain, and that is that Mr. James Desmond, who is the next heir, is an elderly gentleman of a very amiable disposition, so that this **persecution**² does not arise from him. I really think that we may eliminate him entirely from our calculations. There remain the people who will actually surround Sir Henry Baskerville upon the moor."

1. orders, 2. harassment; to annoy persistently

"Would it not be well in the first place to get rid of this Barrymore couple?"

"By no means. You could not make a greater mistake. If they are innocent it would be a cruel injustice, and if they are guilty we should be giving up all chance of bringing it home to them. No, no, we will preserve them upon our list of suspects. Then there is a groom at the Hall, if I remember right. There are two moorland farmers. There is our friend Dr. Mortimer, whom I believe to be entirely honest, and there is his wife, of whom we know nothing. There is this naturalist, Stapleton, and there is his sister, who is said to be a young lady of attractions. There is Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, who is also an unknown factor, and there are one or two other neighbours. These are the folk who must be your very special study."

"I will do my best."

"You have arms, I suppose?"

"Yes, I thought it as well to take them."

"Most certainly. Keep your revolver near you night and day, and never relax your precautions."

Our friends had already secured a first-class carriage and were waiting for us upon the platform.

"No, we have no news of any kind," said Dr. Mortimer in answer to my friend's questions. "I can swear to one thing, and that is that we have not been shadowed³ during the last two days. We have never gone out without keeping a sharp watch, and no one could have escaped our notice."

"You have always kept together, I presume?"

"Except yesterday afternoon. I usually give up

3. followed secretly

curve of a wood there rose in the distance a gray, melancholy hill, with a strange jagged⁷ summit, dim and vague in the distance, like some fantastic landscape in a dream. Baskerville sat for a long time his eyes fixed upon it, and I read upon his eager face how much it meant to him, this first sight of that strange spot where the men of his blood had held sway⁸ so long and left their mark so deep. There he sat, with his tweed suit and his American accent, in the corner of a prosaic railway-carriage, and yet as I looked at his dark and expressive face I felt more than ever how true a descendant he was of that long line of high-blooded, fiery, and masterful men. There were pride, valour⁹, and strength in his thick brows, his sensitive nostrils, and his large hazel eyes. If on that forbidding moor a difficult and dangerous quest¹⁰ should lie before us, this was at least a comrade for whom one might venture to take a risk with the certainty that he would bravely share it.

The train pulled up at a small wayside station and we all descended. Outside, beyond the low, white fence, a wagonette with a pair of cobs¹¹ was waiting. Our coming was evidently a great event, for station-master and porters clustered round us to carry out our luggage. It was a sweet, simple country spot, but I was surprised to observe that by the gate there stood two soldierly men in dark uniforms who leaned upon their short rifles and glanced keenly at us as we passed. The coachman, a hardfaced, gnarled¹² little fellow, saluted Sir Henry Baskerville, and in a few minutes we were flying swiftly down the broad, white road. Rolling pasture lands curved upward on either side of us, and old gabled houses peeped out

8. to exercise control, 9. bravery, 10. search, 11. horses, 12. bent

from amid the thick green foliage, but behind the peaceful and sunlit countryside there rose ever, dark against the evening sky, the long, gloomy curve of the moor, broken by the jagged and sinister¹³ hills.

The wagonette swung round into a side road, and we curved upward through deep lanes worn by centuries of wheels, high banks on either side, heavy with dripping moss and fleshy hart's-tongue¹⁴ ferns. Bronzing bracken¹⁵ and mottled¹⁶ bramble¹⁷ gleamed in the light of the sinking sun. Still steadily rising, we passed over a narrow granite bridge and skirted a noisy stream which gushed swiftly down, foaming and roaring amid the gray boulders. Both road and stream wound up through a valley dense with scrub oak and fir. At every turn Baskerville gave an exclamation of delight, looking eagerly about him and asking countless questions. To his eyes all seemed beautiful, but to me a tinge of melancholy lay upon the countryside, which bore so clearly the mark of the waning¹⁸ year. Yellow leaves carpeted the lanes and fluttered down upon us as we passed. The rattle of our wheels died away as we drove through drifts of rotting vegetation — sad gifts, as it seemed to me, for Nature to throw before the carriage of the returning heir of the Baskervilles.

"Halloa!" cried Dr. Mortimer, "what is this?"

A steep curve of heath-clad¹⁹ land, an outlying spur²⁰ of the moor, lay in front of us. On the summit, hard and clear like an equestrian²¹ statue upon its pedestal, was a mounted soldier, dark and stern, his

13. threatening, 14. a fern having long; wavy-edged leaves, 15. a large fern, 16. spotted, 17. the common blackberry, 18. approaching an end, 19. covered with shrubs, 20. ridge; projection, 21. representing a person mounted on a horse

rifle poised ready over his forearm. He was watching the road along which we travelled.

"What is this, Perkins?" asked Dr. Mortimer.

Our driver half turned in his seat. "There's a convict escaped from Princetown, sir. He's been out three days now, and the warders²² watch every road and every station, but they've had no sight of him yet. The farmers about here don't like it, sir, and that's a fact."

"Well, I understand that they get five pounds if they can give information."

"Yes, sir, but the chance of five pounds is but a poor thing compared to the chance of having your throat cut. You see, it isn't like any ordinary convict. This is a man that would stick at nothing."

"Who is he, then?"

"It is Selden, the Notting Hill murderer."

I remembered the case well, for it was one in which Holmes had taken an interest on account of the peculiar ferocity of the crime and the wanton brutality²³ which had marked all the actions of the assassin. The commutation²⁴ of his death sentence had been due to some doubts as to his complete sanity, so atrocious²⁵ was his conduct. Our wagonette had topped a rise and in front of us rose the huge expanse of the moor, mottled²⁶ with gnarled and craggy cairns²⁷ and tors²⁸. A cold wind swept down from it and set us shivering. Somewhere there, on that desolate plain, was lurking this fiendish²⁹

22. officials having charge of prisoners in jail, 23. maliciously cruel, 24. the changing of a prison sentence to another less severe, 25. wicked or brutal, 26. spotted; dotted, 27. a heap of stones set up as a landmark, monument, etc., 28. peaks of bare or rocky mountains, 29. inhumanly cruel and wicked

man, hiding in a burrow like a wild beast, his heart full of malignancy against the whole race which had cast him out. It needed but this to complete the grim suggestiveness of the barren waste, the chilling wind, and the darkling sky. Even Baskerville fell silent and pulled his overcoat more closely around him.

We had left the fertile country behind and beneath us. We looked back on it now, the slanting rays of a low sun turning the streams to threads of gold and glowing on the red earth new turned by the plough and the broad tangle of the woodlands. The road in front of us grew bleaker and wilder over huge russet³⁰ and olive slopes, sprinkled with giant boulders. Now and then we passed a moorland cottage, walled and roofed with stone, with no creeper to break its harsh outline. Suddenly we looked down into a cuplike depression, patched with stunted oaks and firs which had been twisted and bent by the fury of years of storm. Two high, narrow towers rose over the trees. The driver pointed with his whip.

"Baskerville Hall," said he.

Its master had risen and was staring with flushed cheeks and shining eyes. A few minutes later we had reached the lodge-gates, a maze of fantastic tracery in wrought iron, with weather-bitten pillars on either side, blotched³¹ with lichens, and surmounted³² by the boars' heads of the Baskervilles. The lodge was a ruin of black granite and bared ribs of rafters³³, but facing it was a new building, half constructed, the first fruit of Sir Charles' South African gold.

30. reddish brown, 31. blotted, 32. to be on top of, 33. timber used for supporting the covering of a roof

Through the gateway we passed into the avenue, where the wheels were again hushed amid the leaves, and the old trees shot their branches in a sombre tunnel over our heads. Baskerville shuddered as he looked up the long, dark drive to where the house glimmered like a ghost at the farther end.

"Was it here?" he asked in a low voice.

"No, no, the yew alley is on the other side."

The young heir glanced round with a gloomy face.

"It's no wonder my uncle felt as if trouble were coming on him in such a place as this," said he. "It's enough to scare any man. I'll have a row of electric lamps up here inside of six months, and you won't know it again, with a thousand candlepower Swan and Edison right here in front of the hall door."

The avenue opened into a broad expanse of turf, and the house lay before us. In the fading light I could see that the centre was a heavy block of building from which a porch projected. The whole front was draped in ivy, with a patch clipped bare here and there where a window or a coat of arms broke through the dark veil. From this central block rose the twin towers, ancient, **crenelated**³⁴, and pierced with many loopholes. To right and left of the **turrets**³⁵ were more modern wings of black granite. A dull light shone through heavy **mullioned**³⁶ windows, and from the high chimneys which rose from the steep, high-angled roof there sprang a single black column of smoke.

"Welcome, Sir Henry! Welcome to Baskerville Hall!"

A tall man had stepped from the shadow of the porch to open the door of the wagonette. The figure

34. ridged, 35. small towers, 36. paneled

of a woman was **silhouetted**³⁷ against the yellow light of the hall. She came out and helped the man to hand down our bags.

"You don't mind my driving straight home, Sir Henry?" said Dr. Mortimer. "My wife is expecting me."

"Surely you will stay and have some dinner?"

"No, I must go. I shall probably find some work awaiting me. I would stay to show you over the house, but Barrymore will be a better guide than I. Good-bye, and never hesitate night or day to send for me if I can be of service."

The wheels died away down the drive while Sir Henry and I turned into the hall, and the door clanged heavily behind us. It was a fine apartment in which we found ourselves, large, lofty, and heavily raftered with huge **baulks**³⁸ of age-blackened oak. In the great old-fashioned fireplace behind the high iron dogs a log-fire crackled and snapped. Sir Henry and I held out our hands to it, for we were numb from our long drive. Then we gazed round us at the high, thin window of old stained glass, the oak panelling, the stags' heads, the coats of arms upon the walls, all dim and sombre in the subdued light of the central lamp.

"It's just as I imagined it," said Sir Henry. "Is it not the very picture of an old family home? To think that this should be the same hall in which for five hundred years my people have lived. It strikes me solemn to think of it."

I saw his dark face lit up with a boyish enthusiasm as he gazed about him. The light beat

37. outlined, 38. heavy timber

upon him where he stood, but long shadows trailed down the walls and hung like a black canopy above him. Barrymore had returned from taking our luggage to our rooms. He stood in front of us now with the subdued manner of a well-trained servant. He was a remarkable-looking man, tall, handsome, with a square black beard and pale, distinguished features.

"Would you wish dinner to be served at once, sir?"

"Is it ready?"

"In a very few minutes, sir. You will find hot water in your rooms. My wife and I will be happy, Sir Henry, to stay with you until you have made your fresh arrangements, but you will understand that under the new conditions this house will require a considerable staff."

"What new conditions?"

"I only meant, sir, that Sir Charles led a very retired life, and we were able to look after his wants. You would, naturally, wish to have more company, and so you will need changes in your household."

"Do you mean that your wife and you wish to leave?"

"Only when it is quite convenient to you, sir."

"But your family have been with us for several generations, have they not? I should be sorry to begin my life here by breaking an old family connection."

I seemed to discern³⁹ some signs of emotion upon the butler's white face.

"I feel that also, sir, and so does my wife. But to tell the truth, sir, we were both very much attached to Sir Charles and his death gave us a shock and made

39. see; sense

these surroundings very painful to us. I fear that we shall never again be easy in our minds at Baskerville Hall."

"But what do you intend to do?"

"I have no doubt, sir, that we shall succeed in establishing ourselves in some business. Sir Charles' generosity has given us the means to do so. And now, sir, perhaps I had best show you to your rooms."

A square balustraded⁴⁰ gallery ran round the top of the old hall, approached by a double stair. From this central point two long corridors extended the whole length of the building, from which all the bedrooms opened. My own was in the same wing as Baskerville's and almost next door to it. These rooms appeared to be much more modern than the central part of the house, and the bright paper and numerous candles did something to remove the sombre impression which our arrival had left upon my mind.

But the dining-room which opened out of the hall was a place of shadow and gloom.

It was a long chamber with a step separating the dais where the family sat from the lower portion reserved for their dependents. At one end a minstrel's gallery overlooked it. Black beams shot across above our heads, with a smoke-darkened ceiling beyond them. With rows of flaring torches to light it up, and the colour and rude hilarity of an old-time banquet, it might have softened; but now, when two black-clothed gentlemen sat in the little circle of light thrown by a shaded lamp, one's voice became hushed and one's spirit subdued. A dim line of ancestors, in every variety of dress, from the Elizabethan knight

40. railing with closely spaced supports

to the buck of the Regency, stared down upon us and daunted us by their silent company. We talked little, and I for one was glad when the meal was over and we were able to retire into the modern billiard-room and smoke a cigarette.

"My word, it isn't a very cheerful place," said Sir Henry. "I suppose one can tone down to it, but I feel a bit out of the picture at present. I don't wonder that my uncle got a little jumpy if he lived all alone in such a house as this. However, if it suits you, we will retire early tonight, and perhaps things may seem more cheerful in the morning."

I drew aside my curtains before I went to bed and looked out from my window. It opened upon the grassy space which lay in front of the hall door. Beyond, two copses⁴¹ of trees moaned and swung in a rising wind. A half moon broke through the rifts of racing clouds. In its cold light I saw beyond the trees a broken fringe of rocks, and the long, low curve of the melancholy moor. I closed the curtain, feeling that my last impression was in keeping with the rest.

And yet it was not quite the last. I found myself weary and yet wakeful, tossing restlessly from side to side, seeking for the sleep which would not come. Far away a chiming⁴² clock struck out the quarters of the hours, but otherwise a deathly silence lay upon the old house. And then suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a sound to my ears, clear, resonant, and unmistakable. It was the sob of a woman, the muffled, strangling gasp of one who is torn by an uncontrollable sorrow. I sat up in bed and listened intently. The noise could not have been far

41. thickets of small trees or bushes, 42. clanging

away and was certainly in the house. For half an hour I waited with every nerve on the alert, but there came no other sound save the chiming clock and the rustle⁴³ of the ivy on the wall.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Dr. Mortimer suspect Sir Henry's desire to see the moor at the earliest by questioning, "Are you"?
 2. Why did all the scene on their way from the railway station to the Baskerville Hall appear to be beautiful and eye-catching and the same scene appeared to be melancholic to Watson?
 3. "The lodge was a ruin of black granite... but facing it was a new building, half-constructed, the first fruit of Sir Charles' South African gold." What meaning do you conclude of the 'first fruit of Sir Charles' South African gold?
 4. What was the announcement made by Sir Henry at the sight of the house that seemed like a ghost at the farther end of the gloomy and dark alley?
 5. Who was the man, in your opinion, who welcomed Sir Henry to the Baskerville Hall, and who was the lady who came out to help the man to hand down their baggage?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

Homer instructed Watson to write to him and give him all the possible facts, not just new theories. In particular, he wanted to understand the neighbours, all of whom were suspects. The Barrymore's, the safe of Dr. Mortimer, Stapleton and his sister and Mr. Frankland of Lafter Hall were all supposed to be suspects. Holmes and

43. a series of soft sounds

Watson met Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer. Holmes pleaded with Sir Henry not to move out at night alone and remain in the company of Dr. Watson all the time. Holmes also preferred that Sir Henry to be an interesting and amiable man. They had enjoyable ride through the countryside, but as they approached, a warden with a gun was guarding the environment. It seemed there was a dangerous convict...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Watson and Holmes arrive much on the time for the train. Watson is armed with a revolver and a suspect list of about two people.
2. The missing boot of Sir Henry has not been found.
3. Holmes warns the baronet never to go out alone and particularly to avoid the moor at night.
4. Young Baskerville had never seen the Hall before and hence is eager.
5. They note the presence of an armed soldier, and the driver of the wagonette in which they are now travelling explains that Selden, the Notting Hill murderer, has escaped and is believed to be hiding out nearby.
6. Barrymore and his wife greet them as they pull up, and after Dr. Mortimer depends for his home, they enter the Hall.
7. Barrymore announces that he and his wife wish to depart though they will stay on until a larger staff is acquired.
8. The long time servant shows Sir Henry and Watson to their rooms.
9. Watson had trouble falling asleep, and through the quiet, hears a woman crying somewhere in the house.

EXERCISE

1. What is the point that Barrymore says to Sir Henry after saying to them that the dinner would be ready in a few minutes? What made him say all that?
2. What makes Barrymore say to Sir Henry that he is afraid of that they shall never be easy in their minds at Baskerville Hall? What do you guess out of it?
3. How did Sir Henry react to the dining room of the Baskerville Hall? What kind of feelings must have cropped up in his mind after seeing the dining hall against the circumstances he had come across to the Baskerville Hall?
4. What made Sir Henry advise to Watson to retire early that night and discuss the points the next morning?
5. What was the uncommon thing that took place in the dead of night on the first day of their stay at the Baskerville House? Make decision what is to happen next in the story. Justify your answer with suitable reasons.

Character-Sketches

Based on your understanding of the events draw character-sketch of the following persons:

1. Dr. Mortimer
2. Sir Henry Baskerville
3. Barrymore, Sir Charles' butler.

Chapter 7

The Stapletons of Merripit House

The fresh beauty of the following morning did something to efface¹ from our minds the grim and gray impression which had been left upon both of us by our first experience of Baskerville Hall. As Sir Henry and I sat at breakfast the sunlight flooded in through the high mullioned windows, throwing watery patches of colour from the coats of arms which covered them. The dark panelling glowed like bronze in the golden rays, and it was hard to realize that this was indeed the chamber which had struck such a gloom into our souls upon the evening before.

"I guess it is ourselves and not the house that we have to blame!" said the baronet. "We were tired with our journey and chilled by our drive, so we took a gray view of the place. Now we are fresh and well, so it is all cheerful once more."

"And yet it was not entirely a question of imagination," I answered. "Did you, for example, happen to hear someone, a woman I think, sobbing in the night?"

"That is curious, for I did when I was half asleep fancy that I heard something of the sort. I waited quite a time, but there was no more of it, so I concluded that it was all a dream."

1. to wipe out

"I heard it distinctly, and I am sure that it was really the sob of a woman."

"We must ask about this right away." He rang the bell and asked Barrymore whether he could account for our experience. It seemed to me that the pallid² features of the butler turned a shade paler still as he listened to his master's question.

"There are only two women in the house, Sir Henry," he answered. "One is the scullery-maid³, who sleeps in the other wing. The other is my wife, and I can answer for it that the sound could not have come from her."

And yet he lied as he said it, for it chanced that after breakfast I met Mrs. Barrymore in the long corridor with the sun full upon her face. She was a large, impassive⁴, heavy-featured woman with a stern set expression of mouth. But her telltale eyes were red and glanced at me from between swollen lids. It was she, then, who wept in the night, and if she did so her husband must know it. Yet he had taken the obvious risk of discovery in declaring that it was not so. Why had he done this? And why did she weep so bitterly? Already round this pale-faced, handsome, black-bearded man there was gathering an atmosphere of mystery and of gloom. It was he who had been the first to discover the body of Sir Charles, and we had only his word for all the circumstances which led up to the old man's death. Was it possible that it was Barrymore, after all, whom we had seen in the cab in Regent Street? The beard might well have been the same. The cabman had described a somewhat shorter man, but such an

2. pale, 3. a maid who works in the kitchen, 4. without emotion

impression might easily have been **erroneous**⁵. How could I settle the point forever? Obviously the first thing to do was to see the Grimpen postmaster and find whether the test telegram had really been placed in Barrymore's own hands. Be the answer what it might, I should at least have something to report to Sherlock Holmes.

Sir Henry had numerous papers to examine after breakfast, so that the time was **propitious**⁶ for my excursion. It was a pleasant walk of four miles along the edge of the moor, leading me at last to a small gray hamlet, in which two larger buildings, which proved to be the inn and the house of Dr. Mortimer, stood high above the rest. The postmaster, who was also the village grocer, had a clear recollection of the telegram.

"Certainly, sir," said he, "I had the telegram delivered to Mr. Barrymore exactly as directed."

"Who delivered it?"

"My boy here. James, you delivered that telegram to Mr. Barrymore at the Hall last week, did you not?"

"Yes, father, I delivered it."

"Into his own hands?" I asked.

"Well, he was up in the loft at the time, so that I could not put it into his own hands, but I gave it into Mrs. Barrymore's hands, and she promised to deliver it at once."

"Did you see Mr. Barrymore?"

"No, sir; I tell you he was in the loft."

"If you didn't see him, how do you know he was in the loft?"

"Well, surely his own wife ought to know where he is," said the postmaster testily. "Didn't he get the

5. wrong; mistaken, 6. favourable

telegram? If there is any mistake it is for Mr. Barrymore himself to complain."

It seemed hopeless to pursue the inquiry any farther, but it was clear that in spite of Holmes' ruse we had no proof that Barrymore had not been in London all the time. Suppose that it were so — suppose that the same man had been the last who had seen Sir Charles alive, and the first to dog the new heir when he returned to England. What then? Was he the agent of others or had he some sinister design of his own? What interest could he have in persecuting⁷ the Baskerville family? I thought of the strange warning clipped out of the leading article of the Times. Was that his work or was it possibly the doing of someone who was bent upon counteracting his schemes? The only conceivable motive was that which had been suggested by Sir Henry, that if the family could be scared away a comfortable and permanent home would be secured for the Barrymores. But surely such an explanation as that would be quite inadequate to account for the deep and subtle scheming which seemed to be weaving an invisible net round the young baronet. Holmes himself had said that no more complex case had come to him in all the long series of his sensational investigations. I prayed, as I walked back along the gray, lonely road, that my friend might soon be freed from his preoccupations and able to come down to take this heavy burden of responsibility from my shoulders.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made the butler's face turn pale when Sir Henry made inquiry regarding him about the sobbing of some women the previous night?

7. annoying or troubling persistently; harassing

2. How did Watson conclude that the answer given by the butler to his master's question was only a lie?
 3. Why did Dr. Watson suspect that it could be Barrymore whom they had seen in the cab in the Regent Street?
 4. What made Watson go to see the Grimpen postmaster instantly?
 5. Was the meeting with the Grimpen postmaster confirmed which Watson wanted to verify? If not, why so?
 6. What was the interest of the suspected man in persecuting the Baskerville family?
-

Suddenly my thoughts were interrupted by the sound of running feet behind me and by a voice which called me by name. I turned, expecting to see Dr. Mortimer, but to my surprise it was a stranger who was pursuing me. He was a small, slim, clean-shaven, prim-faced man, flaxen-haired and leanjawed, between thirty and forty years of age, dressed in a gray suit and wearing a straw hat. A tin box for botanical specimens hung over his shoulder and he carried a green butterfly-net in one of his hands.

"You will, I am sure, excuse my presumption, Dr. Watson," said he as he came panting up to where I stood. "Here on the moor we are homely folk and do not wait for formal introductions. You may possibly have heard my name from our mutual friend, Mortimer. I am Stapleton, of Merripit House."

"Your net and box would have told me as much," said I, "for I knew that Mr. Stapleton was a naturalist. But how did you know me?"

"I have been calling on Mortimer, and he pointed you out to me from the window of his surgery as you passed. As our road lay the same way I thought that

I would overtake you and introduce myself. I trust that Sir Henry is none the worse for his journey?"

"He is very well, thank you."

"We were all rather afraid that after the sad death of Sir Charles the new baronet might refuse to live here. It is asking much of a wealthy man to come down and bury himself in a place of this kind, but I need not tell you that it means a very great deal to the countryside. Sir Henry has, I suppose, no superstitious fears in the matter?"

"I do not think that it is likely."

"Of course you know the legend of the fiend dog which haunts the family?"

"I have heard it."

"It is extraordinary how credulous⁸ the peasants are about here! Any number of them are ready to swear that they have seen such a creature upon the moor." He spoke with a smile, but I seemed to read in his eyes that he took the matter more seriously. "The story took a great hold upon the imagination of Sir Charles, and I have no doubt that it led to his tragic end."

"But how?"

"His nerves were so worked up that the appearance of any dog might have had a fatal⁹ effect upon his diseased heart. I fancy that he really did see something of the kind upon that last night in the yew alley. I feared that some disaster might occur, for I was very fond of the old man, and I knew that his heart was weak."

"How did you know that?"

"My friend Mortimer told me."

8. trusting; gullible, 9. deadly; causing death

"You think, then, that some dog pursued Sir Charles, and that he died of fright in consequence?"

"Have you any better explanation?"

"I have not come to any conclusion."

"Has Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

The words took away my breath for an instant but a glance at the placid face and steadfast eyes of my companion showed that no surprise was intended.

"It is useless for us to pretend that we do not know you, Dr. Watson," said he. "The records of your detective have reached us here, and you could not celebrate him without being known yourself. When Mortimer told me your name he could not deny your identity. If you are here, then it follows that Mr. Sherlock Holmes is interesting himself in the matter, and I am naturally curious to know what view he may take."

"I am afraid that I cannot answer that question."

"May I ask if he is going to honour us with a visit himself?"

"He cannot leave town at present. He has other cases which engage his attention."

"What a pity! He might throw some light on that which is so dark to us. But as to your own researches, if there is any possible way in which I can be of service to you I trust that you will command me. If I had any indication of the nature of your suspicions or how you propose to investigate the case, I might perhaps even now give you some aid or advice."

"I assure you that I am simply here upon a visit to my friend, Sir Henry, and that I need no help of any kind."

"Excellent!" said Stapleton. "You are perfectly right to be wary and discreet. I am justly **reproved**¹⁰

¹⁰ corrected; scolded

for what I feel was an unjustifiable intrusion¹¹, and I promise you that I will not mention the matter again."

We had come to a point where a narrow grassy path struck off from the road and wound away across the moor. A steep, boulder-sprinkled hill lay upon the right which had in bygone days been cut into a granite quarry¹². The face which was turned towards us formed a dark cliff, with ferns and brambles¹³ growing in its niches¹⁴. From over a distant rise there floated a gray plume of smoke.

"A moderate walk along this moor-path brings us to Merripit House," said he. "Perhaps you will spare an hour that I may have the pleasure of introducing you to my sister."

My first thought was that I should be by Sir Henry's side. But then I remembered the pile of papers and bills with which his study table was littered. It was certain that I could not help with those. And Holmes had expressly said that I should study the neighbours upon the moor. I accepted Stapleton's invitation, and we turned together down the path.

"It is a wonderful place, the moor," said he, looking round over the undulating downs¹⁵, long green rollers, with crests of jagged granite foaming up into fantastic surges¹⁶. "You never tire of the moor. You cannot think the wonderful secrets which it contains. It is so vast, and so barren, and so mysterious."

"You know it well, then?"

11. interference, 12. a pit from where stone is mined, 13. the common blackberry; any prickly shrub, 14. crevices; cracks, 15. rolling ridges, 16. waves

"I have only been here two years. The residents would call me a newcomer. We came shortly after Sir Charles settled. But my tastes led me to explore every part of the country round, and I should think that there are few men who know it better than I do."

"Is it hard to know?"

"Very hard. You see, for example, this great plain to the north here with the queer hills breaking out of it. Do you observe anything remarkable about that?"

"It would be a rare place for a gallop."

"You would naturally think so and the thought has cost several their lives before now. You notice those bright green spots scattered thickly over it?"

"Yes, they seem more fertile than the rest."

Stapleton laughed. "That is the great Grimpen Mire," said he. "A false step yonder means death to man or beast. Only yesterday I saw one of the moor ponies wander into it. He never came out. I saw his head for quite a long time craning out of the bog-hole, but it sucked him down at last. Even in dry seasons it is a danger to cross it, but after these autumn rains it is an awful place. And yet I can find my way to the very heart of it and return alive. By George, there is another of those miserable ponies!"

Something brown was rolling and tossing among the green sedges¹⁷. Then a long, agonized, writhing¹⁸ neck shot upward and a dreadful cry echoed over the moor. It turned me cold with horror, but my companion's nerves seemed to be stronger than mine.

17. grass-like plants growing in wet places, 18. squirming in pain

"It's gone!" said he. "The mire has him. Two in two days, and many more, perhaps, for they get in the way of going there in the dry weather and never know the difference until the mire has them in its clutches. It's a bad place, the great Grimpen Mire."

"And you say you can penetrate it?"

"Yes, there are one or two paths which a very active man can take. I have found them out."

"But why should you wish to go into so horrible a place?"

"Well, you see the hills beyond? They are really islands cut off on all sides by the impassable mire, which has crawled round them in the course of years. That is where the rare plants and the butterflies are, if you have the wit to reach them."

"I shall try my luck some day."

He looked at me with a surprised face. "For God's sake put such an idea out of your mind," said he. "Your blood would be upon my head. I assure you that there would not be the least chance of your coming back alive. It is only by remembering certain complex landmarks that I am able to do it."

"Halloa!" I cried. "What is that?"

A long, low moan, indescribably sad, swept over the moor. It filled the whole air, and yet it was impossible to say whence it came. From a dull murmur it swelled into a deep roar, and then sank back into a melancholy, throbbing murmur once again. Stapleton looked at me with a curious expression in his face.

"Queer place, the moor!" said he.

"But what is it?"

"The peasants say it is the Hound of the

"Baskervilles calling for its prey. I've heard it once or twice before, but never quite so loud."

I looked round, with a chill of fear in my heart, at the huge swelling plain, mottled with the green patches of rushes. Nothing stirred over the vast expanse save a pair of ravens, which croaked loudly from a tor¹⁹ behind us.

"You are an educated man. You don't believe such nonsense as that?" said I. "What do you think is the cause of so strange a sound?"

"Bogs make queer noises sometimes. It's the mud settling, or the water rising, or something."

"No, no, that was a living voice."

"Well, perhaps it was. Did you ever hear a bittern²⁰ booming?"

"No, I never did."

"It's a very rare bird — practically extinct — in England now, but all things are possible upon the moor. Yes, I should not be surprised to learn that what we have heard is the cry of the last of the bitterns."

"It's the weirdest²¹, strangest thing that ever I heard in my life."

"Yes, it's rather an uncanny²² place altogether. Look at the hillside yonder. What do you make of those?"

The whole steep slope was covered with gray circular rings of stone, a score of them at least.

"What are they? Sheep-pens?"

"No, they are the homes of our worthy ancestors. Prehistoric man lived thickly on the moor, and as no one in particular has lived there since, we find all

19. peak of a bare or rocky mountain, 20. heron; egret; a long-necked; long legged bird, 21. strangest, 22. extraordinary; uncomfortably strange

his little arrangements exactly as he left them. These are his wigwams²³ with the roofs off. You can even see his hearth and his couch if you have the curiosity to go inside.

"But it is quite a town. When was it inhabited?"

"Neolithic man — no date."

"What did he do?"

"He grazed his cattle on these slopes, and he learned to dig for tin when the bronze sword began to supersede the stone axe. Look at the great trench in the opposite hill. That is his mark. Yes, you will find some very singular points about the moor, Dr. Watson. Oh, excuse me an instant! It is surely Cyclopes."

A small fly or moth had fluttered across our path, and in an instant Stapleton was rushing with extraordinary energy and speed in pursuit of it. To my dismay the creature flew straight for the great mire²⁴, and my acquaintance never paused for an instant, bounding from tuft to tuft behind it, his green net waving in the air. His gray clothes and jerky, zigzag, irregular progress made him not unlike some huge moth himself. I was standing watching his pursuit with a mixture of admiration for his extraordinary activity and fear lest he should lose his footing in the treacherous mire when I heard the sound of steps and, turning round, found a woman near me upon the path. She had come from the direction in which the plume of smoke indicated the position of Merripit House, but the dip of the moor had hid her until she was quite close.

23. an American Indian home, 24. marsh; wet,; swampy ground

I could not doubt that this was the Miss Stapleton of whom I had been told, since ladies of any sort must be few upon the moor, and I remembered that I had heard someone describe her as being a beauty. The woman who approached me was certainly that, and of a most uncommon type. There could not have been a greater contrast between brother and sister, for Stapleton was neutral tinted, with light hair and gray eyes, while she was darker than any **brunette**²⁵ whom I have seen in England — slim, elegant, and tall. She had a proud, finely cut face, so regular that it might have seemed impassive were it not for the sensitive mouth and the beautiful dark, eager eyes. With her perfect figure and elegant dress she was, indeed, a strange **apparition**²⁶ upon a lonely moorland path. Her eyes were on her brother as I turned, and then she quickened her pace towards me. I had raised my hat and was about to make some explanatory remark when her own words turned all my thoughts into a new channel.

"Go back!" she said. "Go straight back to London, instantly."

I could only stare at her in stupid surprise. Her eyes blazed at me, and she tapped the ground impatiently with her foot.

"Why should I go back?" I asked.

"I cannot explain." She spoke in a low, eager voice, with a curious **lisp**²⁷ in her utterance. "But for God's sake do what I ask you. Go back and never set foot upon the moor again."

"But I have only just come."

25. a person having dark coloured hair, eyes and skin.
26. appearance of a person or a thing; especially a ghost, 27. a speech defect

"Man, man!" she cried. "Can you not tell when a warning is for your own good? Go back to London! Start tonight! Get away from this place at all costs! Hush, my brother is coming! Not a word of what I have said. Would you mind getting that orchid for me among the mare's-tails yonder? We are very rich in orchids on the moor, though, of course, you are rather late to see the beauties of the place."

Stapleton had abandoned the chase and came back to us breathing hard and flushed with his exertions.

"Halloa, Beryl!" said he, and it seemed to me that the tone of his greeting was not altogether a cordial one.

"Well, Jack, you are very hot."

"Yes, I was chasing a Cyclopes. He is very rare and seldom found in the late autumn. What a pity that I should have missed him!" He spoke unconcernedly, but his small light eyes glanced incessantly from the girl to me.

"You have introduced yourselves, I can see."

"Yes. I was telling Sir Henry that it was rather late for him to see the true beauties of the moor."

"Why, who do you think this is?"

"I imagine that it must be Sir Henry Baskerville."

"No, no," said I. "Only a humble commoner, but his friend. My name is Dr. Watson."

A flush of vexation²⁸ passed over her expressive face. "We have been talking at cross purposes," said she.

"Why, you had not very much time for talk," her brother remarked with the same questioning eyes.

"I talked as if Dr. Watson were a resident instead

28. irritation

of being merely a visitor," said she. "It cannot much matter to him whether it is early or late for the orchids. But you will come on, will you not, and see Merripit House?"

A short walk brought us to it, a bleak moorland house, once the farm of some grazier in the old prosperous days, but now put into repair and turned into a modern dwelling. An orchard surrounded it, but the trees, as is usual upon the moor, were stunted and nipped, and the effect of the whole place was mean and melancholy. We were admitted by a strange, wizened²⁹, rusty-coated old manservant, who seemed in keeping with the house. Inside, however, there were large rooms furnished with an elegance in which I seemed to recognize the taste of the lady. As I looked from their windows at the interminable granite-flecked moor rolling unbroken to the farthest horizon I could not but marvel at what could have brought this highly educated man and this beautiful woman to live in such a place.

"Queer spot to choose, is it not?" said he as if in answer to my thought. "And yet we manage to make ourselves fairly happy, do we not, Beryl?"

"Quite happy," said she, but there was no ring of conviction³⁰ in her words.

"I had a school," said Stapleton. "It was in the north country. The work to a man of my temperament was mechanical and uninteresting, but the privilege of living with youth, of helping to mould those young minds, and of impressing them with one's own character and ideals was very dear to me. However, the fates were against us. A serious epidemic broke

29. withered; wrinkled, 30. confidence

out in the school and three of the boys died. It never recovered from the blow, and much of my capital was irretrievably swallowed up. And yet, if it were not for the loss of the charming companionship of the boys, I could rejoice over my own misfortune, for, with my strong tastes for botany and zoology, I find an unlimited field of work here, and my sister is as devoted to Nature as I am. All this, Dr. Watson, has been brought upon your head by your expression as you surveyed the moor out of our window."

"It certainly did cross my mind that it might be a little dull — less for you, perhaps, than for your sister."

"No, no, I am never dull," said she quickly.

"We have books, we have our studies, and we have interesting neighbours. Dr. Mortimer is a most learned man in his own line. Poor Sir Charles was also an admirable companion. We knew him well and miss him more than I can tell. Do you think that I should intrude³¹ if I were to call this afternoon and make the acquaintance of Sir Henry?"

"I am sure that he would be delighted."

"Then perhaps you would mention that I propose to do so. We may in our humble way do something to make things more easy for him until he becomes accustomed to his new surroundings. Will you come upstairs, Dr. Watson, and inspect my collection of Lepidoptera? I think it is the most complete one in the south-west of England. By the time that you have looked through them lunch will be almost ready."

But I was eager to get back to my charge. The melancholy of the moor, the death of the unfortunate pony, the weird sound which had been associated with

31. disturb

the grim legend of the Baskervilles, all these things tinged my thoughts with sadness. Then on the top of these more or less vague impressions there had come the definite and distinct warning of Miss Stapleton, delivered with such intense earnestness that I could not doubt that some grave and deep reason lay behind it. I resisted all pressure to stay for lunch, and I set off at once upon my return journey, taking the grass-grown path by which we had come.

It seems, however, that there must have been some short cut for those who know it, for before I had reached the road I was astounded to see Miss Stapleton sitting upon a rock by the side of the track. Her face was beautifully flushed with her exertions and she held her hand to her side.

"I have run all the way in order to cut you off, Dr. Watson," said she. "I had not even time to put on my hat. I must not stop, or my brother may miss me. I wanted to say to you how sorry I am about the stupid mistake I made in thinking that you were Sir Henry. Please forget the words I said, which have no application whatever to you."

"But I can't forget them, Miss Stapleton," said I. "I am Sir Henry's friend, and his welfare is a very close concern of mine. Tell me why it was that you were so eager that Sir Henry should return to London."

"A woman's whim, Dr. Watson. When you know me better you will understand that I cannot always give reasons for what I say or do."

"No, no. I remember the thrill in your voice. I remember the look in your eyes. Please, please, be frank with me, Miss Stapleton, for ever since I have been here I have been conscious of shadows all round me. Life has become like that great Grimpen Mire,

with little green patches everywhere into which one may sink and with no guide to point the track. Tell me then what it was that you meant, and I will promise to convey your warning to Sir Henry."

An expression of irresolution³² passed for an instant over her face, but her eyes had hardened again when she answered me.

"You make too much of it, Dr. Watson," said she. "My brother and I were very much shocked by the death of Sir Charles. We knew him very intimately, for his favourite walk was over the moor to our house. He was deeply impressed with the curse which hung over the family, and when this tragedy came I naturally felt that there must be some grounds for the fears which he had expressed. I was distressed therefore when another member of the family came down to live here, and I felt that he should be warned of the danger which he will run. That was all which I intended to convey.

"But what is the danger?"

"You know the story of the hound?"

"I do not believe in such nonsense."

"But I do. If you have any influence with Sir Henry, take him away from a place which has always been fatal to his family. The world is wide. Why should he wish to live at the place of danger?"

"Because it is the place of danger. That is Sir Henry's nature. I fear that unless you can give me some more definite information than this it would be impossible to get him to move."

"I cannot say anything definite, for I do not know anything definite."

"I would ask you one more question, Miss

32. lack of decision

Stapleton. If you meant no more than this when you first spoke to me, why should you not wish your brother to overhear what you said? There is nothing to which he, or anyone else, could object."

"My brother is very anxious to have the Hall inhabited, for he thinks it is for the good of the poor folk upon the moor. He would be very angry if he knew that I have said anything which might induce³³ Sir Henry to go away. But I have done my duty now and I will say no more. I must go back, or he will miss me and suspect that I have seen you. Good-bye!" She turned and had disappeared in a few minutes among the scattered boulders, while I, with my soul full of vague fears, pursued my way to Baskerville Hall.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What could be the conceivable motive for deprecating Sir Henry or anybody from his family from coming down and settling at the Baskerville Hall?
 2. Do you consider, the explanation given by Stapleton for knowing Watson and Sherlock Holmes through Dr. Mortimer in such a short period of time is convincing to a sensible person?
 3. How does Watson excuse himself from getting any help offered by Stapleton of Merripit House?
 4. What made Mr. Stapleton ask Watson to quit the idea of trying out the dangerous paths in the moor?
-

33. cause

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER**Understanding the Plot**

The next morning Watson told Sir Henry that he had heard a woman sob in the night. Sir Henry had heard it too. Mrs. Barrymore was found to be having swollen eyes but denied that she had been crying. Watson suspected that Barrymore's were the murderers because of that latest lie and also because Barrymore had beard like the passenger in the cab. Watson tried to make a check as to whether Barrymore got the telegram personally in his hands. The postman explained that he had given it to Mrs. Barrymore who in turn gave it to Mr. Barrymore. This had aroused Watson suspicion all the more.

As he walked along the road, Watson could hear behind him. It was Stapleton of Merripit House, a residence near Baskerville Hall. Stapleton enquired about Sir Henry. He was surprised that Sir Henry wanted to live in Baskerville Hall even after the terrible death of Sir Charles...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. In the morning, Watson is still thinking of the sound from last night of the sobbing of a woman.
2. Sir Henry also seems to have heard the sobs and hence calls in Barrymore to question him.
3. Barrymore denies of it being his wife, though shortly afterward, Watson sees her books as if she had been crying.
4. Leaving Sir Henry to his paperwork, the suspicious Watson goes to see the postmaster.

5. It is evident now that the telegram was actually given to Barrymore's wife, and so was no longer proof that the man was indeed at the Hall, not London.
6. Watson encounters the suspicious Stapletons. The naturalist man catches up with him and introduces himself.
7. Stapleton says that he and his sister have live on the moor for two years.
8. 'A long, low moan, indescribably sad' can be heard quite distinctly all about.
9. The sound gets louder and then dies down, leaving Watson full of fear and wonder.
10. Stapleton says some attributes to the hound and when further pressed offers the probability of being the boy settling or a cry of the almost extinct bittern.
11. Stapleton points out to Watson how the dwellings of Neolithic man remain intact on the hill side, as further evidence of the strange atmosphere of the moor.
12. Mistaking Watson for Sir Henry, Miss Stapleton tells him urgently to go back to London, never to return to the moor.
13. On her brothers return there, she quickly changes the subject.
14. The small group continues onto the house.
15. Watson once again encounters a Stapleton on his way back to the Hall, this time miss, who has run ahead and been waiting for him. She asks him to disregard her warning and plays it off as a female over-reaction.

EXERCISE

1. Which incident led to Watson to look at Barrymore with some sort of suspicion?
2. Which subjects created suspicions regarding Stapleton of Merripit House?
3. What kind of warning did Miss Stapleton of Merripit House give to Watson? What do you conclude from this warning?
4. What made Mr. Stapleton and his sister Miss Stapleton to meet Sir Henry?
5. What made Miss Stapleton hide her warning that she had given to Watson from her brother? Write suitable reasons to your answer.

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the events, write character-sketch of the following characters.

1. Dr. Watson
2. Mr. Stapleton of Merripit House
3. Miss Stapleton of Merripit House

Chapter 8

First Report of Dr. Watson

From this point onward I will follow the course of events by transcribing¹ my own letters to Mr. Sherlock Holmes which lie before me on the table. One page is missing, but otherwise they are exactly as written and show my feelings and suspicions of the moment more accurately than my memory, clear as it is upon these tragic events, can possibly do.

Baskerville Hall, October 13th.

MY DEAR HOLMES:

My previous letters and telegrams have kept you pretty well up to date as to all that has occurred in this most God-forsaken corner of the world. The longer one stays here the more does the spirit of the moor sink into one's soul, its vastness, and also its grim charm. When you are once out upon its bosom you have left all traces of modern England behind you, but, on the other hand, you are conscious everywhere of the homes and the work of the prehistoric people. On all sides of you as you walk are the houses of these forgotten folk, with their graves and the huge monoliths² which are supposed to have marked their temples. As you look at their gray stone huts against the scarred hillsides you

1. copying, 2. columns etc. formed of a single block of stone

leave your own age behind you, and if you were to see a skin-clad, hairy man crawl out from the low door fitting a flint-tipped arrow on to the string of his bow, you would feel that his presence there was more natural than your own. The strange thing is that they should have lived so thickly on what must always have been most unfruitful soil. I am no antiquarian³, but I could imagine that they were some unwarlike and harried⁴ race who were forced to accept that which none other would occupy.

All this, however, is foreign to the mission on which you sent me and will probably be very uninteresting to your severely practical mind. I can still remember your complete indifference as to whether the sun moved round the earth or the earth round the sun. Let me, therefore, return to the facts concerning Sir Henry Baskerville.

If you have not had any report within the last few days it is because up to today there was nothing of importance to relate. Then a very surprising circumstance occurred, which I shall tell you in due course. But, first of all, I must keep you in touch with some of the other factors in the situation.

One of these, concerning which I have said little, is the escaped convict upon the moor. There is strong reason now to believe that he has got right away, which is a considerable relief to the lonely householders of this district. A fortnight has passed since his flight, during which he has not been seen and nothing has been heard of him. It is surely inconceivable that he could have held out upon the moor during all that time. Of course, so far as his

3. study of ancient things, 4. to harass or annoy

concealment goes there is no difficulty at all. Any one of these stone huts would give him a hiding-place. But there is nothing to eat unless he were to catch and slaughter one of the moor sheep. We think, therefore, that he has gone, and the outlying farmers sleep the better in consequence.

We are four able-bodied men in this household, so that we could take good care of ourselves, but I confess that I have had uneasy moments when I have thought of the Stapletons. They live miles from any help. There are one maid, an old manservant, the sister, and the brother, the latter not a very strong man. They would be helpless in the hands of a desperate fellow like this Notting Hill criminal if he could once effect an entrance. Both Sir Henry and I were concerned at their situation, and it was suggested that Perkins the groom should go over to sleep there, but Stapleton would not hear of it.

The fact is that our friend, the baronet, begins to display a considerable interest in our fair neighbour. It is not to be wondered at, for time hangs heavily in this lonely spot to an active man like him, and she is a very fascinating and beautiful woman. There is something tropical and *exotic*⁵ about her which forms a singular contrast to her cool and unemotional brother. Yet he also gives the idea of hidden fires. He has certainly a very marked influence over her, for I have seen her continually glance at him as she talked as if seeking *approbation*⁶ for what she said. I trust that he is kind to her. There is a dry glitter in his eyes and a firm set of his thin lips, which goes with a positive and possibly a harsh nature. You would find him an interesting study.

5. foreign, 6. approval

He came over to call upon Baskerville on that first day, and the very next morning he took us both to show us the spot where the legend of the wicked Hugo is supposed to have had its origin. It was an excursion of some miles across the moor to a place which is so dismal that it might have suggested the story. We found a short valley between rugged tors which led to an open, grassy space flecked over with the white cotton grass. In the middle of it rose two great stones, worn and sharpened at the upper end until they looked like the huge corroding fangs of some monstrous beast. In every way it corresponded with the scene of the old tragedy. Sir Henry was much interested and asked Stapleton more than once whether he did really believe in the possibility of the interference of the supernatural in the affairs of men. He spoke lightly, but it was evident that he was very much in earnest. Stapleton was guarded in his replies, but it was easy to see that he said less than he might, and that he would not express his whole opinion out of consideration for the feelings of the baronet. He told us of similar cases, where families had suffered from some evil influence, and he left us with the impression that he shared the popular view upon the matter.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why was Baskerville House the most God-forsaken corner of the globe in Watson's opinion?
2. What did Watson describe about the spirit of the moor?
3. Describe regarding strangeness about the place and the people who reside there?
4. What made Watson give a detailed profile of Mr. Stapleton and Miss Stapleton of merit in his report to Sherlock Holmes?

Are these characters doubtful, in your opinion, to be examined completely?

5. What was the reason behind Watson's mention regarding Sir Henry's fascination for Miss Stapleton? What seems strangeness regarding this relationship?
6. What made Mr. Stapleton take Sir Henry on the following day of his visit to him to the place where the legend of wicked Hugo is reported to have originated?

On our way back we stayed for lunch at Merripit House, and it was there that Sir Henry made the acquaintance of Miss Stapleton. From the first moment that he saw her he appeared to be strongly attracted by her, and I am much mistaken if the feeling was not mutual. He referred to her again and again on our walk home, and since then hardly a day has passed that we have not seen something of the brother and sister. They dine here tonight, and there is some talk of our going to them next week. One would imagine that such a match would be very welcome to Stapleton, and yet I have more than once caught a look of the strongest disapprobation in his face when Sir Henry has been paying some attention to his sister. He is much attached to her, no doubt, and would lead a lonely life without her, but it would seem the height of selfishness if he were to stand in the way of her making so brilliant a marriage. Yet I am certain that he does not wish their intimacy to ripen into love, and I have several times observed that he has taken pains to prevent them from being *tete-a-tete*. By the way, your instructions to me never to allow Sir Henry to go out alone will become very much more **onerous**⁷ if a love affair were to be added

7. troublesome

to our other difficulties. My popularity would soon suffer if I were to carry out your orders to the letter.

The other day — Thursday, to be more exact — Dr. Mortimer lunched with us. He has been excavating a barrow at Long Down and has got a prehistoric skull which fills him with great joy. Never was there such a single-minded enthusiast as he! The Stapletons came in afterwards, and the good doctor took us all to the yew alley at Sir Henry's request to show us exactly how everything occurred upon that fatal night. It is a long, dismal walk, the yew alley, between two high walls of clipped hedge, with a narrow band of grass upon either side. At the far end is an old tumble-down summer-house. Halfway down is the moor-gate, where the old gentleman left his cigar-ash. It is a white wooden gate with a latch. Beyond it lies the wide moor. I remembered your theory of the affair and tried to picture all that had occurred. As the old man stood there he saw something coming across the moor, something which terrified him so that he lost his wits and ran and ran until he died of sheer horror and exhaustion. There was the long, gloomy tunnel down which he fled. And from what? A sheep-dog of the moor? Or a *spectral*⁸ hound, black, silent, and monstrous? Was there a human agency in the matter? Did the pale, watchful Barrymore know more than he cared to say? It was all dim and vague, but always there is the dark shadow of crime behind it.

One other neighbour I have met since I wrote last. This is Mr. Frankland, of Lafter Hall, who lives some

⁸. ghostly

four miles to the south of us. He is an elderly man, red-faced, white-haired, and choleric. His passion is for the British law, and he has spent a large fortune in litigation⁹. He fights for the mere pleasure of fighting and is equally ready to take up either side of a question, so that it is no wonder that he has found it a costly amusement. Sometimes he will shut up a right of way and defy the parish to make him open it. At others he will with his own hands tear down some other man's gate and declare that a path has existed there from time immemorial, defying the owner to prosecute him for trespass. He is learned in old manorial¹⁰ and communal rights, and he applies his knowledge sometimes in favour of the villagers of Fernworthy and sometimes against them, so that he is periodically either carried in triumph down the village street or else burned in effigy, according to his latest exploit. He is said to have about seven lawsuits upon his hands at present, which will probably swallow up the remainder of his fortune and so draw his sting and leave him harmless for the future. Apart from the law he seems a kindly, good-natured person, and I only mention him because you were particular that I should send some description of the people who surround us. He is curiously employed at present, for, being an amateur astronomer, he has an excellent telescope, with which he lies upon the roof of his own house and sweeps the moor all day in the hope of catching a glimpse of the escaped convict. If he would confine his energies to this all would be well, but there are rumours that he intends to prosecute Dr. Mortimer

9. legal dispute, 10. territorial; pertaining to an estate

for opening a grave without the consent of the next of kin because he dug up the neolithic skull in the **barrow**¹¹ on Long Down. He helps to keep our lives from being monotonous and gives a little comic relief where it is badly needed.

And now, having brought you up to date in the escaped convict, the Stapletons, Dr. Mortimer, and Frankland, of Lafter Hall, let me end on that which is most important and tell you more about the Barrymores, and especially about the surprising development of last night.

First of all about the test telegram, which you sent from London in order to make sure that Barrymore was really here. I have already explained that the testimony of the postmaster shows that the test was worthless and that we have no proof one way or the other. I told Sir Henry how the matter stood, and he at once, in his downright fashion, had Barrymore up and asked him whether he had received the telegram himself. Barrymore said that he had.

"Did the boy deliver it into your own hands?" asked Sir Henry.

Barrymore looked surprised, and considered for a little time.

"No," said he, "I was in the box-room at the time, and my wife brought it up to me."

"Did you answer it yourself?"

"No; I told my wife what to answer and she went down to write it."

In the evening he recurred to the subject of his own accord.

"I could not quite understand the object of your questions this morning, Sir Henry," said he. "I trust

11. hill, 12. lose

that they do not mean that I have done anything to forfeit¹² your confidence?"

Sir Henry had to assure him that it was not so and pacify him by giving him a considerable part of his old wardrobe, the London outfit having now all arrived.

Mrs. Barrymore is of interest to me. She is a heavy, solid person, very limited, intensely respectable, and inclined to be **puritanical**¹³. You could hardly conceive a less emotional subject. Yet I have told you how, on the first night here, I heard her sobbing bitterly, and since then I have more than once observed traces of tears upon her face. Some deep sorrow **gnaws**¹⁴ ever at her heart. Sometimes I wonder if she has a guilty memory which haunts her, and sometimes I suspect Barrymore of being a domestic tyrant. I have always felt that there was something singular and questionable in this man's character, but the adventure of last night brings all my suspicions to a head.

And yet it may seem a small matter in itself. You are aware that I am not a very sound sleeper, and since I have been on guard in this house my slumbers have been lighter than ever. Last night, about two in the morning, I was aroused by a stealthy step passing my room. I rose, opened my door, and peeped out. A long black shadow was trailing down the corridor. It was thrown by a man who walked softly down the passage with a candle held in his hand. He was in shirt and trousers, with no covering to his feet. I could merely see the outline, but his height told me that it was Barrymore. He walked very slowly and

13. rigid in moral matters, 14. eats away, 15. cautiously; carefully.
16. secret; cunning

circumspectly¹⁵, and there was something indescribably guilty and furtive¹⁶ in his whole appearance.

I have told you that the corridor is broken by the balcony which runs round the hall, but that it is resumed upon the farther side. I waited until he had passed out of sight and then I followed him. When I came round the balcony he had reached the end of the farther corridor, and I could see from the glimmer of light through an open door that he had entered one of the rooms. Now, all these rooms are unfurnished and unoccupied so that his expedition became more mysterious than ever. The light shone steadily as if he were standing motionless. I crept down the passage as noiselessly as I could and peeped round the corner of the door.

Barrymore was crouching at the window with the candle held against the glass. His profile was half turned towards me, and his face seemed to be rigid with expectation as he stared out into the blackness of the moor. For some minutes he stood watching intently. Then he gave a deep groan and with an impatient gesture he put out the light. Instantly I made my way back to my room, and very shortly came the stealthy steps passing once more upon their return journey. Long afterwards when I had fallen into a light sleep I heard a key turn somewhere in a lock, but I could not tell whence the sound came. What it all means I cannot guess, but there is some secret business going on in this house of gloom which sooner or later we shall get to the bottom of. I do not trouble you with my theories, for you asked me to furnish you only with facts. I have had a long talk with Sir Henry this morning, and we have made a plan of campaign

founded upon my observations of last night. I will not speak about it just now, but it should make my next report interesting reading.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Mr. Watson think that Mr. Stapleton disapproved of any sort of intimacy in the relationship of Miss Stapleton with Sir Henry?
 2. Why of all characters whom Watson met at Baskerville Hall he seems to doubt Mr. Barrymore the most?
 3. What invigorated Mr. Watson's doubt about Barrymore?
 4. What made Watson say with surity that there was some secret business going on in the Baskerville Hall?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

This chapter, along with more, is in the form of a letter from Dr. Watson. We do not find a proper narrative with quotations. In this letter, Dr. Watson write about the grim atmosphere of the place and then apologized to Holmes for being impractical. He then told Sherlock Holmes that on escaped convict named Selden was hiding on the moor. He was a depraved murderer. Watson was quite sure that since there were four strong bodied men at Baskerville Hall, they were not in danger. Even then he was worried about the Stapleton. Mr. Stapleton was a small man and his sister was extremely beautiful to the extent that she had captured the heart of Sir Henry. Stapleton, being possessive of his sister, seemed to stand in the way of their love affair....

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Watson in his letter dated October 13, to Holmes, has first to report on the relief of the countryside, which believes the convict Selden has gone.
2. Of other news, Stapleton did go and see Sir Henry, as he had suggested doing upon meeting Watson that same day. He takes Henry to the spot where the ancestor Hugo supposedly met his end.
3. They stop at Merripit House and Sir Henry takes a romantic interest in Miss Stapleton.
4. After a few days, Dr. Mortimer comes to lunch and shows them all where Sir Charles had died that mysterious night.
5. Watson also has had a chance to meet Mr. Frankland, a nearby elderly inhabitant. He has recently been employing his telescope in searching the moor for the convict.
6. The Barrymore continue to stirrup doubts. Mr. Barrymore behaves unemotionally but Watson suspects she is weighed down by a great sadness.
7. Barrymore concedes that the telegram was not actually placed in his hands.
8. Sir Henry gives Barrymore some of his old clothes but the uncertainties regarding the servant's behaviour resurface fast.
9. The ever fitful sleeper Watson hears Barrymore pass by his room, barefoot and by candlelight; he follows at a distance and sees him enter an empty room.
10. He holds the light to the window for a few minutes then puts it out and returns back down the corridor.
11. Later that night, Watson hears a key turn in a lock. He reports to their occurrences to Sir Henry in the morning and the two make plans.

EXERCISE

1. Explain in brief about the events that strengthened Mr. Watson's doubt regarding Mr. Barrymore after landing at Baskerville house.
2. Discuss the incidents that generate doubts around Stapleton in Watson's mind.
3. Cross-examine the role of Miss Stapleton in the progress of the plot.
4. Discuss about the reports submitted by Watson to Sherlock Holmes that rotates mainly around three characters—Barrymore, Mr. Stapleton and Miss Stapleton.
5. Do you consider that Watson should have discussed all doubtful incidents occurred at the Baskerville House with Sir Henry without further verification. Write your answer with suitable reasons.

Character-Sketches

Write the character-sketch of the following persons, on the basis of your understanding of the incidents, underlining the new traits of head and heart explored in this chapter:

1. Barrymore
2. Sir Henry
3. Mr. Stapleton
4. Miss Stapleton
5. Mrs. Barrymore

Chapter 9

Second Report of Dr. Watson

THE LIGHT UPON THE MOOR

Baskerville Hall, Oct. 15th.

MY DEAR HOLMES:

If I was compelled to leave you without much news during the early days of my mission you must acknowledge that I am making up for lost time, and that events are now crowding thick and fast upon us. In my last report I ended upon my top note with Barrymore at the window, and now I have quite a budget already which will, unless I am much mistaken, considerably surprise you. Things have taken a turn which I could not have anticipated. In some ways they have within the last forty-eight hours become much clearer and in some ways they have become more complicated. But I will tell you all and you shall judge for yourself.

Before breakfast on the morning following my adventure I went down the corridor and examined the room in which Barrymore had been on the night before. The western window through which he had stared so intently has, I noticed, one peculiarity above all other windows in the house — it commands the nearest outlook on to the moor. There is an opening between two trees which enables one from this point

of view to look right down upon it, while from all the other windows it is only a distant glimpse which can be obtained. It follows, therefore, that Barrymore, since only this window would serve the purpose, must have been looking out for something or somebody upon the moor. The night was very dark, so that I can hardly imagine how he could have hoped to see anyone. It had struck me that it was possible that some love intrigue¹ was on foot. That would have accounted for his stealthy movements and also for the uneasiness of his wife. The man is a striking-looking fellow, very well equipped to steal the heart of a country girl, so that this theory seemed to have something to support it. That opening of the door which I had heard after I had returned to my room might mean that he had gone out to keep some clandestine² appointment. So I reasoned with myself in the morning, and I tell you the direction of my suspicions, however much the result may have shown that they were unfounded.

But whatever the true explanation of Barrymore's movements might be, I felt that the responsibility of keeping them to myself until I could explain them was more than I could bear. I had an interview with the baronet in his study after breakfast, and I told him all that I had seen. He was less surprised than I had expected.

"I knew that Barrymore walked about nights, and I had a mind to speak to him about it," said he. "Two or three times I have heard his steps in the passage, coming and going, just about the hour you name."

"Perhaps then he pays a visit every night to that particular window," I suggested.

1. secret love-affair, 2. private and secret

"Perhaps he does. If so, we should be able to shadow him and see what it is that he is after. I wonder what your friend Holmes would do if he were here."

"I believe that he would do exactly what you now suggest," said I. "He would follow Barrymore and see what he did."

"Then we shall do it together."

"But surely he would hear us."

"The man is rather deaf, and in any case we must take our chance of that. We'll sit up in my room to-night and wait until he passes." Sir Henry rubbed his hands with pleasure, and it was evident that he hailed the adventure as a relief to his somewhat quiet life upon the moor.

The baronet has been in communication with the architect who prepared the plans for Sir Charles, and with a contractor from London, so that we may expect great changes to begin here soon. There have been decorators and furnishers up from Plymouth, and it is evident that our friend has large ideas and means to spare no pains or expense to restore the grandeur of his family. When the house is renovated and refurnished, all that he will need will be a wife to make it complete. Between ourselves there are pretty clear signs that this will not be wanting if the lady is willing, for I have seldom seen a man more infatuated³ with a woman than he is with our beautiful neighbour, Miss Stapleton. And yet the course of true love does not run quite as smoothly as one would under the circumstances expect. Today, for example, its surface was broken by a very unexpected ripple, which has caused our friend considerable perplexity and annoyance.

3. possessed of unreasoning passion

After the conversation which I have quoted about Barrymore, Sir Henry put on his hat and prepared to go out. As a matter of course I did the same.

"What, are you coming, Watson?" he asked, looking at me in a curious way.

"That depends on whether you are going on the moor," said I.

"Yes, I am."

"Well, you know what my instructions are. I am sorry to intrude, but you heard how earnestly Holmes insisted that I should not leave you, and especially that you should not go alone upon the moor."

Sir Henry put his hand upon my shoulder, with a pleasant smile.

"My dear fellow," said he, "Holmes, with all his wisdom, did not foresee some things which have happened since I have been on the moor. You understand me? I am sure that you are the last man in the world who would wish to be a spoil-sport. I must go out alone."

It put me in a most awkward position. I was at a loss what to say or what to do, and before I had made up my mind he picked up his cane and was gone.

But when I came to think the matter over my conscience reproached me bitterly for having on any pretext allowed him to go out of my sight. I imagined what my feelings would be if I had to return to you and to confess that some misfortune had occurred through my disregard for your instructions. I assure you my cheeks flushed at the very thought. It might not even now be too late to overtake him, so I set off at once in the direction of Merripit House.

I hurried along the road at the top of my speed without seeing anything of Sir Henry, until I came

to the point where the moor path branches off. There, fearing that perhaps I had come in the wrong direction after all, I mounted a hill from which I could command a view — the same hill which is cut into the dark quarry. Thence I saw him at once. He was on the moor path about a quarter of a mile off, and a lady was by his side who could only be Miss Stapleton. It was clear that there was already an understanding between them and that they had met by appointment. They were walking slowly along in deep conversation, and I saw her making quick little movements of her hands as if she were very earnest in what she was saying, while he listened intently, and once or twice shook his head in strong dissent. I stood among the rocks watching them, very much puzzled as to what I should do next. To follow them and break into their intimate conversation seemed to be an outrage, and yet my clear duty was never for an instant to let him out of my sight. To act the spy upon a friend was a hateful task. Still, I could see no better course than to observe him from the hill, and to clear my conscience by confessing to him afterwards what I had done. It is true that if any sudden danger had threatened him I was too far away to be of use, and yet I am sure that you will agree with me that the position was very difficult, and that there was nothing more which I could do.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Watson call his facts, found at the Baskerville House within forty-eight hours, much clearer but more complex?
2. What was the doubt to Watson regarding Barrymore's stealthy movements at the dead of night?

3. What kind of conjecture does Watson draw from Sir Henry's nexus with Miss Stapleton?
 4. Why did Sir Henry not give permission to Watson to accompany him to the moor in spite of Watson's insistence and recalling him about his duty at Baskerville House as briefed by Holmes?
 5. What made Watson follow Sir Henry stealthily in the direction of Merripit House?
-

Our friend, Sir Henry, and the lady had halted on the path and were standing deeply absorbed in their conversation, when I was suddenly aware that I was not the only witness of their interview. A wisp of green floating in the air caught my eye, and another glance showed me that it was carried on a stick by a man who was moving among the broken ground. It was Stapleton with his butterfly-net. He was very much closer to the pair than I was, and he appeared to be moving in their direction. At this instant Sir Henry suddenly drew Miss Stapleton to his side. His arm was round her, but it seemed to me that she was straining away from him with her face **averted**⁴. He stooped his head to hers, and she raised one hand as if in protest. Next moment I saw them spring apart and turn hurriedly round. Stapleton was the cause of the interruption. He was running wildly towards them, his absurd net dangling behind him. He **gesticulated**⁵ and almost danced with excitement in front of the lovers. What the scene meant I could not imagine, but it seemed to me that Stapleton was abusing Sir Henry, who offered explanations, which became more angry as the other refused to accept them. The lady stood by in haughty silence. Finally

4. turned aside, 5. use of hands to express an emotion

Stapleton turned upon his heel and beckoned⁶ in a peremptory⁷ way to his sister, who, after an irresolute glance at Sir Henry, walked off by the side of her brother. The naturalist's angry gestures showed that the lady was included in his displeasure. The baronet stood for a minute looking after them, and then he walked slowly back the way that he had come, his head hanging, the very picture of dejection.

What all this meant I could not imagine, but I was deeply ashamed to have witnessed so intimate a scene without my friend's knowledge. I ran down the hill therefore and met the baronet at the bottom. His face was flushed with anger and his brows were wrinkled, like one who is at his wit's ends what to do.

"Halloa, Watson! Where have you dropped from?" said he. "You don't mean to say that you came after me in spite of all?"

I explained everything to him: how I had found it impossible to remain behind, how I had followed him, and how I had witnessed all that had occurred. For an instant his eyes blazed at me, but my frankness disarmed his anger, and he broke at last into a rather rueful⁸ laugh.

"You would have thought the middle of that prairie a fairly safe place for a man to be private," said he, "but, by thunder, the whole countryside seems to have been out to see me do my wooing — and a mighty poor wooing at that! Where had you engaged a seat?"

"I was on that hill."

"Quite in the back row, eh? But her brother was well up to the front. Did you see him come out on us?"

6. waved the hand to call; signalled, 7. a command that is absolute, 8. remorseful

"Yes, I did."

"Did he ever strike you as being crazy — this brother of hers?"

"I can't say that he ever did."

"I dare say not. I always thought him sane enough until today, but you can take it from me that either he or I ought to be in a straitjacket. What's the matter with me, anyhow? You've lived near me for some weeks, Watson. Tell me straight, now! Is there anything that would prevent me from making a good husband to a woman that I loved?"

"I should say not."

"He can't object to my worldly position, so it must be myself that he has this down on. What has he against me? I never hurt man or woman in my life that I know of. And yet he would not so much as let me touch the tips of her fingers."

"Did he say so?"

"That, and a deal more. I tell you, Watson, I've only known her these few weeks, but from the first I just felt that she was made for me, and she, too — she was happy when she was with me, and that I'll swear. There's a light in a woman's eyes that speaks louder than words. But he has never let us get together and it was only today for the first time that I saw a chance of having a few words with her alone. She was glad to meet me, but when she did it was not love that she would talk about, and she wouldn't have let me talk about it either if she could have stopped it. She kept coming back to it that this was a place of danger, and that she would never be happy until I had left it. I told her that since I had seen her I was in no hurry to leave it, and that if she really wanted me to go, the only way to work it was for her

to arrange to go with me. With that I offered in as many words to marry her, but before she could answer, down came this brother of hers, running at us with a face on him like a madman. He was just white with rage, and those light eyes of his were blazing with fury. What was I doing with the lady? How dared I offer her attentions which were distasteful to her? Did I think that because I was a baronet I could do what I liked? If he had not been her brother I should have known better how to answer him. As it was I told him that my feelings towards his sister were such as I was not ashamed of, and that I hoped that she might honour me by becoming my wife. That seemed to make the matter no better, so then I lost my temper too, and I answered him rather more hotly than I should perhaps, considering that she was standing by. So it ended by his going off with her, as you saw, and here am I as badly puzzled a man as any in this county. Just tell me what it all means, Watson, and I'll owe you more than ever I can hope to pay."

I tried one or two explanations, but, indeed, I was completely puzzled myself. Our friend's title, his fortune, his age, his character, and his appearance are all in his favour, and I know nothing against him unless it be this dark fate which runs in his family. That his advances should be rejected so brusquely⁹ without any reference to the lady's own wishes and that the lady should accept the situation without protest is very amazing. However, our conjectures¹⁰ were set at rest by a visit from Stapleton himself that very afternoon. He had come to offer apologies

9. in an abrupt manner, 10. suppositions; guesswork

for his rudeness of the morning, and after a long private interview with Sir Henry in his study the upshot of their conversation was that the breach is quite healed, and that we are to dine at Merripit House next Friday as a sign of it.

"I don't say now that he isn't a crazy man," said Sir Henry "I can't forget the look in his eyes when he ran at me this morning, but I must allow that no man could make a more handsome apology than he has done."

"Did he give any explanation of his conduct?"

"His sister is everything in his life, he says. That is natural enough, and I am glad that he should understand her value. They have always been together, and according to his account he has been a very lonely man with only her as a companion, so that the thought of losing her was really terrible to him. He had not understood, he said, that I was becoming attached to her, but when he saw with his own eyes that it was really so, and that she might be taken away from him, it gave him such a shock that for a time he was not responsible for what he said or did. He was very sorry for all that had passed, and he recognized how foolish and how selfish it was that he should imagine that he could hold a beautiful woman like his sister to himself for her whole life. If she had to leave him he had rather it was to a neighbour like myself than to anyone else. But in any case it was a blow to him and it would take him some time before he could prepare himself to meet it. He would withdraw all opposition upon his part if I would promise for three months to let the matter rest and to be content with cultivating the lady's friendship during that time without claiming her love. This I promised, and so the matter rests."

So there is one of our small mysteries cleared up. It is something to have touched bottom anywhere in this **bog**¹¹ in which we are **floundering**¹². We know now why Stapleton looked with disfavour upon his sister's suitor — even when that suitor was so eligible a one as Sir Henry. And now I pass on to another thread which I have **extricated**¹³ out of the **tangled skein**¹⁴, the mystery of the sobs in the night, of the tear-stained face of Mrs. Barrymore, of the secret journey of the butler to the western lattice¹⁵ window. Congratulate me, my dear Holmes, and tell me that I have not disappointed you as an agent — that you do not regret the confidence which you showed in me when you sent me down. All these things have by one night's work been thoroughly cleared.

I have said "by one night's work," but, in truth, it was by two nights' work, for on the first we drew entirely blank. I sat up with Sir Henry in his rooms until nearly three o'clock in the morning, but no sound of any sort did we hear except the chiming clock upon the stairs. It was a most melancholy vigil and ended by each of us falling asleep in our chairs. Fortunately we were not discouraged, and we determined to try again. The next night we lowered the lamp and sat smoking cigarettes without making the least sound. It was incredible how slowly the hours crawled by, and yet we were helped through it by the same sort of patient interest which the hunter must feel as he watches the trap into which he hopes the game may wander. One struck, and two, and we had almost for the second time given it up in

11. marshy land, 12. stumbling, 13. freed from entanglement,
14. snarled thread, 15. grill or grid

despair when in an instant we both sat bolt upright in our chairs with all our weary senses keenly on the alert once more. We had heard the creak¹⁶ of a step in the passage.

Very stealthily we heard it pass along until it died away in the distance. Then the baronet gently opened his door and we set out in pursuit. Already our man had gone round the gallery and the corridor was all in darkness. Softly we stole along until we had come into the other wing. We were just in time to catch a glimpse of the tall, black-bearded figure, his shoulders rounded as he tiptoed down the passage. Then he passed through the same door as before, and the light of the candle framed it in the darkness and shot one single yellow beam across the gloom of the corridor. We shuffled cautiously towards it, trying every plank before we dared to put our whole weight upon it. We had taken the precaution of leaving our boots behind us, but, even so, the old boards snapped and creaked beneath our tread. Sometimes it seemed impossible that he should fail to hear our approach. However, the man is fortunately rather deaf, and he was entirely preoccupied in that which he was doing. When at last we reached the door and peeped through we found him crouching at the window, candle in hand, his white, intent face pressed against the pane, exactly as I had seen him two nights before.

We had arranged no plan of campaign, but the baronet is a man to whom the most direct way is always the most natural. He walked into the room, and as he did so Barrymore sprang up from the window with a sharp hiss of his breath and stood,

16. scape

livid and trembling, before us. His dark eyes, glaring out of the white mask of his face, were full of horror and astonishment as he gazed from Sir Henry to me.

"What are you doing here, Barrymore?"

"Nothing, sir." His agitation was so great that he could hardly speak, and the shadows sprang up and down from the shaking of his candle. "It was the window, sir. I go round at night to see that they are fastened."

"On the second floor?"

"Yes, sir, all the windows."

"Look here, Barrymore," said Sir Henry sternly, "we have made up our minds to have the truth out of you, so it will save you trouble to tell it sooner rather than later. Come, now! No lies! What were you doing at that window?"

The fellow looked at us in a helpless way, and he wrung¹⁷ his hands together like one who is in the last extremity¹⁸ of doubt and misery.

"I was doing no harm, sir. I was holding a candle to the window."

"And why were you holding a candle to the window?"

"Don't ask me, Sir Henry — don't ask me! I give you my word, sir, that it is not my secret, and that I cannot tell it. If it concerned no one but myself I would not try to keep it from you."

A sudden idea occurred to me, and I took the candle from the trembling hand of the butler.

"He must have been holding it as a signal," said I. "Let us see if there is any answer." I held it as he had done, and stared out into the darkness of the night.

17. clasped highly, 18. the extreme limit; edge

Vaguely I could discern¹⁹ the black bank of the trees and the lighter expanse of the moor, for the moon was behind the clouds. And then I gave a cry of exultation²⁰, for a tiny pin-point of yellow light had suddenly transfixed the dark veil, and glowed steadily in the centre of the black square framed by the window.

"There it is!" I cried.

"No, no, sir, it is nothing — nothing at all!" the butler broke in; "I assure you, sir —"

"Move your light across the window, Watson!" cried the baronet. "See, the other moves also! Now, you rascal, do you deny that it is a signal? Come, speak up! Who is your confederate²¹ out yonder, and what is this conspiracy that is going on?"

The man's face became openly defiant²². "It is my business, and not yours. I will not tell."

"Then you leave my employment right away."

"Very good, sir. If I must I must."

"And you go in disgrace. By thunder, you may well be ashamed of yourself. Your family has lived with mine for over a hundred years under this roof, and here I find you deep in some dark plot against me."

"No, no, sir; no, not against you!" It was a woman's voice, and Mrs. Barrymore, paler and more horror-struck than her husband, was standing at the door. Her bulky figure in a shawl and skirt might have been comic were it not for the intensity of feeling upon her face.

"We have to go, Eliza. This is the end of it. You can pack our things," said the butler.

"Oh, John, John, have I brought you to this? It is

19. see; make out, 20. triumph, 21. accomplice, 22. challenging

my doing, Sir Henry — all mine. He has done nothing except for my sake and because I asked him."

"Speak out, then! What does it mean?"

"My unhappy brother is starving on the moor. We cannot let him perish at our very gates. The light is a signal to him that food is ready for him, and his light out yonder is to show the spot to which to bring it."

"Then your brother is —"

"The escaped convict, sir — Selden, the criminal."

"That's the truth, sir," said Barrymore. "I said that it was not my secret and that I could not tell it to you. But now you have heard it, and you will see that if there was a plot it was not against you."

This, then, was the explanation of the stealthy expeditions at night and the light at the window. Sir Henry and I both stared at the woman in amazement. Was it possible that this stolidly²³ respectable person was of the same blood as one of the most notorious criminals in the country?

"Yes, sir, my name was Selden, and he is my younger brother. We humoured him too much when he was a lad and gave him his own way in everything until he came to think that the world was made for his pleasure, and that he could do what he liked in it. Then as he grew older he met wicked companions, and the devil entered into him until he broke my mother's heart and dragged our name in the dirt. From crime to crime he sank lower and lower until it is only the mercy of God which has snatched him from the scaffold²⁴; but to me, sir, he was always the little curly-headed boy that I had nursed and

23. dully

played with as an elder sister would. That was why he broke prison, sir. He knew that I was here and that we could not refuse to help him. When he dragged himself here one night, weary and starving, with the warders hard at his heels, what could we do? We took him in and fed him and cared for him. Then you returned, sir, and my brother thought he would be safer on the moor than anywhere else until the hue and cry was over, so he lay in hiding there. But every second night we made sure if he was still there by putting a light in the window, and if there was an answer my husband took out some bread and meat to him. Every day we hoped that he was gone, but as long as he was there we could not desert him. That is the whole truth, as I am an honest Christian woman and you will see that if there is blame in the matter it does not lie with my husband but with me, for whose sake he has done all that he has."

The woman's words came with an intense earnestness which carried conviction with them.

"Is this true, Barrymore?"

"Yes, Sir Henry. Every word of it."

"Well, I cannot blame you for standing by your own wife. Forget what I have said. Go to your room, you two, and we shall talk further about this matter in the morning."

When they were gone we looked out of the window again. Sir Henry had flung it open, and the cold night wind beat in upon our faces. Far away in the black distance there still glowed that one tiny point of yellow light.

"I wonder he dares," said Sir Henry.

24. a raised platform on which a criminal is hanged

"It may be so placed as to be only visible from here."

"Very likely. How far do you think it is?"

"Out by the Cleft Tor, I think."

"Not more than a mile or two off."

"Hardly that."

"Well, it cannot be far if Barrymore had to carry out the food to it. And he is waiting, this villain, beside that candle. By thunder, Watson, I am going out to take that man!"

The same thought had crossed my own mind. It was not as if the Barrymores had taken us into their confidence. Their secret had been forced from them. The man was a danger to the community, an **unmitigated**²⁵ scoundrel for whom there was neither pity nor excuse. We were only doing our duty in taking this chance of putting him back where he could do no harm. With his brutal and violent nature, others would have to pay the price if we held our hands. Any night, for example, our neighbours the Stapletons might be attacked by him, and it may have been the thought of this which made Sir Henry so keen upon the adventure.

"I will come," said I.

"Then get your revolver and put on your boots. The sooner we start the better, as the fellow may put out his light and be off."

In five minutes we were outside the door, starting upon our **expedition**²⁶. We hurried through the dark shrubbery, amid the dull moaning of the autumn wind and the rustle of the falling leaves. The night air was heavy with the smell of damp and decay. Now and again the moon peeped out for an instant, but

25. absolute, 26. journey made for a specific purpose

clouds were driving over the face of the sky, and just as we came out on the moor a thin rain began to fall. The light still burned steadily in front.

"Are you armed?" I asked.

"I have a hunting-crop."

"We must close in on him rapidly, for he is said to be a desperate fellow. We shall take him by surprise and have him at our mercy before he can resist."

"I say, Watson," said the baronet, "what would Holmes say to this? How about that hour of darkness in which the power of evil is exalted?"

As if in answer to his words there rose suddenly out of the vast gloom of the moor that strange cry which I had already heard upon the borders of the great Grimpen Mire. It came with the wind through the silence of the night, a long, deep mutter then a rising howl, and then the sad moan in which it died away. Again and again it sounded, the whole air throbbing with it, *strident*²⁷, wild, and menacing. The baronet caught my sleeve and his face glimmered white through the darkness.

"My God, what's that, Watson?"

"I don't know. It's a sound they have on the moor. I heard it once before."

It died away, and an absolute silence closed in upon us. We stood straining our ears, but nothing came.

"Watson," said the baronet, "it was the cry of a hound."

My blood ran cold in my veins, for there was a break in his voice which told of the sudden horror which had seized him.

27. loud; harsh

"What do they call this sound?" he asked.

"Who?"

"The folk on the countryside."

"Oh, they are ignorant people. Why should you mind what they call it?"

"Tell me, Watson. What do they say of it?"

I hesitated but could not escape the question.

"They say it is the cry of the Hound of the Baskervilles."

He groaned and was silent for a few moments.

"A hound it was," he said at last, "but it seemed to come from miles away, over yonder, I think."

"It was hard to say whence it came."

"It rose and fell with the wind. Isn't that the direction of the great Grimpen Mire?"

"Yes, it is."

"Well, it was up there. Come now, Watson, didn't you think yourself that it was the cry of a hound? I am not a child. You need not fear to speak the truth."

"Stapleton was with me when I heard it last. He said that it might be the calling of a strange bird."

"No, no, it was a hound. My God, can there be some truth in all these stories? Is it possible that I am really in danger from so dark a cause? You don't believe it, do you, Watson?"

"No, no."

"And yet it was one thing to laugh about it in London, and it is another to stand out here in the darkness of the moor and to hear such a cry as that. And my uncle! There was the footprint of the hound beside him as he lay. It all fits together. I don't think that I am a coward, Watson, but that sound seemed to freeze my very blood. Feel my hand!"

It was as cold as a block of marble.

"You'll be all right tomorrow."

"I don't think I'll get that cry out of my head. What do you advise that we do now?"

"Shall we turn back?"

"No, by thunder; we have come out to get our man, and we will do it. We after the convict, and a hell-hound, as likely as not, after us. Come on! We'll see it through if all the fiends of the pit were loose upon the moor."

We stumbled slowly along in the darkness, with the black loom of the **craggy**²⁸ hills around us, and the yellow **speck**²⁹ of light burning steadily in front. There is nothing so deceptive as the distance of a light upon a pitch-dark night, and sometimes the glimmer seemed to be far away upon the horizon and sometimes it might have been within a few yards of us. But at last we could see whence it came, and then we knew that we were indeed very close. A **glittering**³⁰ candle was struck in a crevice of the rocks which **flanked**³¹ it on each side so as to keep the wind from it and also to prevent it from being visible, save in the direction of Baskerville Hall. A boulder of granite concealed our approach, and crouching behind it we gazed over it at the signal light. It was strange to see this single candle burning there in the middle of the moor, with no sign of life near it — just the one straight yellow flame and the gleam of the rock on each side of it.

"What shall we do now?" whispered Sir Henry.

"Wait here. He must be near his light. Let us see if we can get a glimpse of him."

28. rugged, 29. something appearing small due to the distance, 30. melting wax, 31. the side of anything

The words were hardly out of my mouth when we both saw him. Over the rocks, in the crevice of which the candle burned, there was thrust out an evil yellow face, a terrible animal face, all seamed and scored with vile passions. Foul with mire, with a bristling beard, and hung with matted hair, it might well have belonged to one of those old savages who dwelt in the burrows on the hillsides. The light beneath him was reflected in his small, cunning eyes which peered fiercely to right and left through the darkness like a crafty and savage animal who has heard the steps of the hunters.

Something had evidently aroused his suspicions. It may have been that Barrymore had some private signal which we had neglected to give, or the fellow may have had some other reason for thinking that all was not well, but I could read his fears upon his wicked face. Any instant he might dash out the light and vanish in the darkness. I sprang forward therefore, and Sir Henry did the same. At the same moment the convict screamed out a curse at us and hurled a rock which splintered³² up against the boulder which had sheltered us. I caught one glimpse of his short, squat³³, strongly built figure as he sprang to his feet and turned to run. At the same moment by a lucky chance the moon broke through the clouds. We rushed over the brow of the hill, and there was our man running with great speed down the other side, springing over the stones in his way with the activity of a mountain goat. A lucky long shot of my revolver might have crippled him, but I had brought it only to defend myself if attacked and not to shoot an unarmed man who was running away.

32. shattered; broke into pieces, 33. short and thickest

We were both swift runners and in fairly good training, but we soon found that we had no chance of overtaking him. We saw him for a long time in the moonlight until he was only a small speck moving swiftly among the boulders upon the side of a distant hill. We ran and ran until we were completely blown, but the space between us grew ever wider. Finally we stopped and sat panting on two rocks, while we watched him disappearing in the distance.

And it was at this moment that there occurred a most strange and unexpected thing. We had risen from our rocks and were turning to go home, having abandoned the hopeless chase. The moon was low upon the right, and the jagged **pinnacle**³⁴ of a granite tor stood up against the lower curve of its silver disc. There, outlined as black as an ebony statue on that shining background, I saw the figure of a man upon the tor. Do not think that it was a **delusion**³⁵, Holmes. I assure you that I have never in my life seen anything more clearly. As far as I could judge, the figure was that of a tall, thin man. He stood with his legs a little separated, his arms folded, his head bowed, as if he were brooding over that enormous **wilderness**³⁶ of peat and granite which lay before him. He might have been the very spirit of that terrible place. It was not the convict. This man was far from the place where the latter had disappeared. Besides, he was a much taller man. With a cry of surprise I pointed him out to the baronet, but in the instant during which I had turned to grasp his arm the man was gone. There was the sharp pinnacle of granite still cutting the lower edge of

34. a taffy peak, 35. fancy; imagination; false impression, 36. wasteland

the moon, but its peak bore no trace of that silent and motionless figure.

I wished to go in that direction and to search the tor, but it was some distance away. The baronet's nerves were still quivering from that cry, which recalled the dark story of his family, and he was not in the mood for fresh adventures. He had not seen this lonely man upon the tor and could not feel the thrill which his strange presence and his commanding attitude had given to me. "A warder, no doubt," said he. "The moor has been thick with them since this fellow escaped." Well, perhaps his explanation may be the right one, but I should like to have some further proof of it. Today we mean to communicate to the Princetown people where they should look for their missing man, but it is hard lines that we have not actually had the triumph of bringing him back as our own prisoner. Such are the adventures of last night, and you must acknowledge, my dear Holmes, that I have done you very well in the matter of a report. Much of what I tell you is no doubt quite irrelevant, but still I feel that it is best that I should let you have all the facts and leave you to select for yourself those which will be of most service to you in helping you to your conclusions. We are certainly making some progress. So far as the Barrymores go we have found the motive of their actions, and that has cleared up the situation very much. But the moor with its mysteries and its strange inhabitants remains as inscrutable as ever. Perhaps in my next I may be able to throw some light upon this also. Best of all would it be if you could come down to us. In any case you will hear from me again in the course of the next few days.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Watson feel that he was not the only one to witness the activities of both Sir Henry and Miss Stapleton in the moor?
 2. Name the person who was stealthily following Sir Henry and Miss Stapleton. What made him follow them?
 3. Conclude what Stapleton must have said to Sir Henry when he must have accosted him with Miss Stapleton?
 4. Why was Sir Henry first annoyed by seeing Watson after all that humiliation in the moor, and then behaved properly with him?
 5. What made Sir Henry say that his emotions towards Mr. Stapleton's sister were such as he was not ashamed of?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot.

We find that Watson continued writing in the conversation style in the form of a letter to a good friend. He told Holmes that he made it his business to look out from the window, which had a view to the moor. The window Barrymore sought the night before. Watson wondered if the handsome looking Barrymore was not cheating on his wife. He told that Sir Henry was planning to get the Baskerville Hall renovated and some builders and decorator had already been contacted. Watson and Sir Henry decided to sit up that night until Barrymore went to the window. Early during the evening time, Sir Henry put on his coat to go for a walk. Watson, who was ordered by Holmes to follow Sir Henry, began to go with him, Sir Henry objected to that and said that he wanted to go alone. But even then Watson followed him. He

watched as Henry met Miss Stapleton and they get engaged in an intimate conversation. Suddenly Mr. Stapleton came...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. The second report is dated two days later.
2. The beginning tells of Sir Henry's attempts for a romance with Miss Stapleton.
3. When Sir Henry goes out on the moor to meet her, he discourages Watson from coming along.
4. Watson is unable to regard Holmes' instructions and risks letting the detective down.
5. Watson sees Sir Henry and Miss Stapleton by his side and decide to keep his distance.
6. The two are engaged in a conversation where Miss Stapleton tries to warn Sir Henry of the danger he is in at the moor and Sir Henry tries to turn the topic back to love.
7. Miss Stapleton resists Sir Henry trying to kiss her and at that very point, a very furious Stapleton arrives.
8. The two men exchange a few angry words; Stapleton goes back, taking his sister with him.
9. Watson leaves his spot and goes to join him when Sir Henry heads back to the Hall.
10. That very afternoon Stapleton comes to the Hall to apologize to Sir Henry and explains that his sister means a lot to him and fears losing his constant companion.
11. Matters are settled when Sir Henry agrees to put the romance on hold to give Stapleton time to adjust. The brother invites them to dinner next Friday.

12. The subtitle 'The Light Upon the Moor' comes into play.
13. Watson has realized of the particular window that Barrymore held his candle up to in the night.
14. Watson tells Sir Henry what he has seen and the baronet who is already aware of the activity and knows that Barrymore is partially deaf, suggests that they shadow him.
15. On the second night, they watch Barrymore with the candle once again go into the same room.
16. Much to the man's shock and anxiety, Sir Henry walks right in to confront him, but he will not answer questions, saying that it is not his secret to reveal.
17. Watson discovers and understands that the light is a signal and when he holds it up to the window, another light on the moor shines back.
18. At the very moment, Mrs. Barrymore enters the room and explains the situation to clear her husband's name.
19. The escaped Selden in her younger brother and the lights are a signal system to get food to him every other night. She still sees him as a child and cannot bear to let him starve so close by.
20. Sir Henry and Watson decide to go out in pursuit of the convict.
21. The frightening sound that Watson heard before once again fills the air. When there is silence, Sir Henry is shaken and confident that the sound was that of a hound, as said by that countryside.
22. However, they continue towards the light which has been placed between the rocks so that it is visible only from the Hall.

23. A savage looking man is hiding close by. Sir Henry and Watson jump out to make their move.
24. The convict throws a rock in their direction and takes off down the hill-side. They try to follow him but it is a lost cause because of the speed and agility of the running man.
25. As both of them get ready to move back to the Hall, Watson spies a man standing on a rocky outcrops, watching them. He is only able to make out the outline before the person disappears but the chances of following is discouraged by Sir Henry, who is still nervous from the sound of the hound.

EXERCISE

1. What made Miss Stapleton keep saying to Sir Henry that she would never become happy until he had left that place, though she was equally enthralled with him?
2. In the light of Watson's own remark, "To act the spy upon a friend was a hateful task," discuss if Watson's decision to follow Sir Henry stealthily in the moor in spite of being clearly told not to accompany him was justified or a breach of the spirit of friendship.
3. What things did Sir Henry say to Watson about his disturbance with Stapleton? Did he have any disgusting emotions after being jilted in his love?
4. On which ground, did Sir Henry realise that Miss Stapleton equally loved him?
5. What made Sir Henry forgive Stapleton the next day when he arrived at the Baskervilles House to seek apology for all his misbehaviour the day before?
6. How did Henry and Watson come to know regarding the secret of Barrymore's going out stealthily to the gate openly in the moor, with a burning candle in the dead of night?

7. What kind of secret was revealed by Mrs. Barrymore regarding the doubtful movements of Barrymore with a burning candle in his hand?

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the events, write character-sketch of the following persons, underlying the new characteristics of head and heart given in this Chapter:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sir Henry | 2. Dr. Watson |
| 3. Mr. Stapleton | 4. Miss Stapleton |
| 5. Mr. Barrymore | 6. Mrs. Barrymore |

Chapter 10

Extract from the Diary of Dr. Watson

So far I have been able to quote from the reports which I have forwarded during these early days to Sherlock Holmes. Now, however, I have arrived at a point in my narrative where I am compelled to abandon this method and to trust once more to my recollections, aided by the diary which I kept at the time. A few extracts from the latter will carry me on to those scenes which are **indelibly**¹ fixed in every detail upon my memory. I proceed, then, from the morning which followed our **abortive**² chase of the convict and our other strange experiences upon the moor.

October 16th. A dull and foggy day with a drizzle of rain. The house is banked in with rolling clouds, which rise now and then to show the dreary curves of the moor, with thin, silver veins upon the sides of the hills, and the distant boulders gleaming where the light strikes upon their wet faces. It is melancholy outside and in. The baronet is in a black reaction after the excitements of the night. I am conscious myself of a weight at my heart and a feeling of **impending**³ danger — ever present danger, which is the more terrible because I am unable to define it.

1. which cannot be forgotten, 2. unsuccessful, 3. be about to happen; threatening or menacing

And have I not cause for such a feeling? Consider the long sequence of incidents which have all pointed to some sinister influence which is at work around us. There is the death of the last occupant of the Hall, fulfilling so exactly the conditions of the family legend, and there are the repeated reports from peasants of the appearance of a strange creature upon the moor. Twice I have with my own ears heard the sound which resembled the distant baying of a hound. It is incredible, impossible, that it should really be outside the ordinary laws of nature. A spectral hound which leaves material footmarks and fills the air with its howling is surely not to be thought of. Stapleton may fall in with such a superstition, and Mortimer also, but if I have one quality upon earth it is common sense, and nothing will persuade me to believe in such a thing. To do so would be to descend to the level of these poor peasants, who are not content with a mere fiend dog but must needs describe him with hell-fire shooting from his mouth and eyes. Holmes would not listen to such fancies, and I am his agent. But facts are facts, and I have twice heard this crying upon the moor. Suppose that there were really some huge hound loose upon it; that would go far to explain everything. But where could such a hound lie concealed, where did it get its food, where did it come from, how was it that no one saw it by day? It must be confessed that the natural explanation offers almost as many difficulties as the other. And always, apart from the hound, there is the fact of the human agency in London, the man in the cab, and the letter which warned Sir Henry against the moor. This at least was real, but it might have been the work of a protecting friend as easily as of an enemy. Where is

that friend or enemy now? Has he remained in London, or has he followed us down here? Could he — could he be the stranger whom I saw upon the tor?

It is true that I have had only the one glance at him, and yet there are some things to which I am ready to swear. He is no one whom I have seen down here, and I have now met all the neighbours. The figure was far taller than that of Stapleton, far thinner than that of Frankland. Barrymore it might possibly have been, but we had left him behind us, and I am certain that he could not have followed us. A stranger then is still **dogging**⁴ us, just as a stranger dogged us in London. We have never shaken him off. If I could lay my hands upon that man, then at last we might find ourselves at the end of all our difficulties. To this one purpose I must now devote all my energies.

My first impulse was to tell Sir Henry all my plans. My second and wisest one is to play my own game and speak as little as possible to anyone. He is silent and **distract**⁵. His nerves have been strangely shaken by that sound upon the moor. I will say nothing to add to his anxieties, but I will take my own steps to attain my own end.

We had a small scene this morning after breakfast. Barrymore asked leave to speak with Sir Henry, and they were closeted in his study some little time. Sitting in the billiard-room I more than once heard the sound of voices raised, and I had a pretty good idea what the point was which was under discussion. After a time the baronet opened his door and called for me. "Barrymore considers that he has

4. following (like a dog), 5. absent-minded; distracted

a grievance," he said. "He thinks that it was unfair on our part to hunt his brother-in-law down when he, of his own free will, had told us the secret."

The butler was standing very pale but very collected before us.

"I may have spoken too warmly, sir," said he, "and if I have, I am sure that I beg your pardon. At the same time, I was very much surprised when I heard you two gentlemen come back this morning and learned that you had been chasing Selden. The poor fellow has enough to fight against without my putting more upon his track."

"If you had told us of your own free will it would have been a different thing," said the baronet, "you only told us, or rather your wife only told us, when it was forced from you and you could not help yourself."

"I didn't think you would have taken advantage of it, Sir Henry — indeed I didn't."

"The man is a public danger. There are lonely houses scattered over the moor, and he is a fellow who would stick at nothing. You only want to get a glimpse of his face to see that. Look at Mr. Stapleton's house, for example, with no one but himself to defend it. There's no safety for anyone until he is under lock and key."

"He'll break into no house, sir. I give you my solemn word upon that. But he will never trouble anyone in this country again. I assure you, Sir Henry, that in a very few days the necessary arrangements will have been made and he will be on his way to South America. For God's sake, sir, I beg of you not to let the police know that he is still on the moor. They have given up the chase there, and he can lie quiet until the ship is ready for him. You can't tell

on him without getting my wife and me into trouble. I beg you, sir, to say nothing to the police."

"What do you say, Watson?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "If he were safely out of the country it would relieve the tax-payer of a burden."

"But how about the chance of his holding someone up before he goes?"

"He would not do anything so mad, sir. We have provided him with all that he can want. To commit a crime would be to show where he was hiding."

"That is true," said Sir Henry. "Well, Barrymore —"

"God bless you, sir, and thank you from my heart! It would have killed my poor wife had he been taken again."

"I guess we are aiding and abetting a felony⁶, Watson? But, after what we have heard I don't feel as if I could give the man up, so there is an end of it. All right, Barrymore, you can go."

With a few broken words of gratitude the man turned, but he hesitated and then came back.

"You've been so kind to us, sir, that I should like to do the best I can for you in return. I know something, Sir Henry, and perhaps I should have said it before, but it was long after the inquest⁷ that I found it out. I've never breathed a word about it yet to mortal man. It's about poor Sir Charles' death."

The baronet and I were both upon our feet. "Do you know how he died?"

"No, sir, I don't know that."

6. crime; wrong doing, 7. a legal inquiry

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Write down the feeling of impending danger that got heavy on Watson's heart?
2. What made Watson not prepare to accept anything beyond ordinary laws of nature, though Stapleton and Watson accepted it?
3. What were the harassing questions that Watson was looking for answers?
4. What made Watson decide not to share his planning regarding his new discovery of L.L. with Sir Henry?
5. How did Barrymore know regarding Sir Henry and Watson chasing his brother-in-law, Selden? Whom do you think must have informed him?
6. What was the excuse given to Barrymore by Watson and Sir Henry for chasing Selden, the criminal brother-in-law of Barrymore?

"What then?"

"I know why he was at the gate at that hour. It was to meet a woman."

"To meet a woman! He?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the woman's name?"

"I can't give you the name, sir, but I can give you the initials. Her initials were L.L."

"How do you know this, Barrymore?"

"Well, Sir Henry, your uncle had a letter that morning. He had usually a great many letters, for he was a public man and well known for his kind heart, so that everyone who was in trouble was glad to turn to him. But that morning, as it chanced, there was only this one letter, so I took the more notice of it. It was from Coombe Tracey, and it was addressed in a woman's hand."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, I thought no more of the matter, and never would have done had it not been for my wife. Only a few weeks ago she was cleaning out Sir Charles' study — it had never been touched since his death — and she found the ashes of a burned letter in the back of the grate. The greater part of it was charred to pieces, but one little slip, the end of a page, hung together, and the writing could still be read, though it was gray on a black ground. It seemed to us to be a postscript at the end of the letter and it said: 'Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock. Beneath it were signed the initials L.L.'"

"Have you got that slip?"

"No, sir, it crumbled all to bits after we moved it."

"Had Sir Charles received any other letters in the same writing?"

"Well, sir, I took no particular notice of his letters. I should not have noticed this one, only it happened to come alone."

"And you have no idea who L.L. is?"

"No, sir. No more than you have. But I expect if we could lay our hands upon that lady we should know more about Sir Charles' death."

"I cannot understand, Barrymore, how you came to conceal this important information."

"Well, sir, it was immediately after that our own trouble came to us. And then again, sir, we were both of us very fond of Sir Charles, as we well might be considering all that he has done for us. To rake this up couldn't help our poor master, and it's well to go carefully when there's a lady in the case. Even the best of us — "

"You thought it might injure his reputation?"

"Well, sir, I thought no good could come of it. But now you have been kind to us, and I feel as if it would be treating you unfairly not to tell you all that I know about the matter."

"Very good, Barrymore; you can go." When the butler had left us Sir Henry turned to me. "Well, Watson, what do you think of this new light?"

"It seems to leave the darkness rather blacker than before."

"So I think. But if we can only trace L.L. it should clear up the whole business. We have gained that much. We know that there is someone who has the facts if we can only find her. What do you think we should do?"

"Let Holmes know all about it at once. It will give him the clue for which he has been seeking. I am much mistaken if it does not bring him down."

I went at once to my room and drew up my report of the morning's conversation for Holmes. It was evident to me that he had been very busy of late, for the notes which I had from Baker Street were few and short, with no comments upon the information which I had supplied and hardly any reference to my mission. No doubt his blackmailing case is absorbing all his faculties. And yet this new factor must surely arrest his attention and renew his interest. I wish that he were here.

October 17th. All day today the rain poured down, rustling on the ivy and dripping from the eaves. I thought of the convict out upon the bleak, cold, shelterless moor. Poor devil! Whatever his crimes, he has suffered something to atone⁸ for

8. to make amends; to make up for

them. And then I thought of that other one — the face in the cab, the figure against the moon. Was he also out in that deluge — the unseen watcher, the man of darkness? In the evening I put on my waterproof and I walked far upon the sodden⁹ moor, full of dark imaginings, the rain beating upon my face and the wind whistling about my ears. God help those who wander into the great mire now, for even the firm uplands are becoming a morass. I found the black tor upon which I had seen the solitary watcher, and from its craggy summit I looked out myself across the melancholy downs. Rain squalls drifted across their russet¹⁰ face, and the heavy, slate-coloured clouds hung low over the landscape, trailing in gray wreaths down the sides of the fantastic hills. In the distant hollow on the left, half hidden by the mist, the two thin towers of Baskerville Hall rose above the trees. They were the only signs of human life which I could see, save only those prehistoric huts which lay thickly upon the slopes of the hills. Nowhere was there any trace of that lonely man whom I had seen on the same spot two nights before.

As I walked back I was overtaken by Dr. Mortimer driving in his dog-cart over a rough moorland track which led from the outlying farmhouse of Foulmire. He has been very attentive to us, and hardly a day has passed that he has not called at the Hall to see how we were getting on. He insisted upon my climbing into his dog-cart, and he gave me a lift homeward. I found him much troubled over the disappearance of his little spaniel. It had

9. wet, 10. brownish

wandered on to the moor and had never come back. I gave him such consolation as I might, but I thought of the pony on the Grimpen Mire, and I do not fancy that he will see his little dog again.

"By the way, Mortimer," said I as we jolted along the rough road, "I suppose there are few people living within driving distance of this whom you do not know?"

"Hardly any, I think."

"Can you, then, tell me the name of any woman whose initials are L.L.?"

He thought for a few minutes.

"No," said he. "There are a few gipsies and labouring folk for whom I can't answer, but among the farmers or gentry there is no one whose initials are those. Wait a bit though," he added after a pause. "There is Laura Lyons — her initials are L.L. — but she lives in Coombe Tracey."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"She is Frankland's daughter."

"What! Old Frankland the crank?"

"Exactly. She married an artist named Lyons, who came sketching on the moor. He proved to be a blackguard and deserted her. The fault from what I hear may not have been entirely on one side. Her father refused to have anything to do with her because she had married without his consent and perhaps for one or two other reasons as well. So, between the old sinner and the young one the girl has had a pretty bad time."

"How does she live?"

"I fancy old Frankland allows her a **pittance**¹¹, but it cannot be more, for his own affairs are

¹¹. a small sum of money

considerably involved. Whatever she may have deserved one could not allow her to go hopelessly to the bad. Her story got about, and several of the people here did something to enable her to earn an honest living. Stapleton did for one, and Sir Charles for another. I gave a trifle myself. It was to set her up in a typewriting business."

He wanted to know the object of my inquiries, but I managed to satisfy his curiosity without telling him too much, for there is no reason why we should take anyone into our confidence. Tomorrow morning I shall find my way to Coombe Tracey, and if I can see this Mrs. Laura Lyons, of *equivocal*¹² reputation, a long step will have been made towards clearing one incident in this chain of mysteries. I am certainly developing the wisdom of the serpent, for when Mortimer pressed his questions to an inconvenient extent I asked him casually to what type Frankland's skull belonged, and so heard nothing but *craniology*¹³ for the rest of our drive. I have not lived for years with Sherlock Holmes for nothing.

I have only one other incident to record upon this *tempestuous*¹⁴ and melancholy day. This was my conversation with Barrymore just now, which gives me one more strong card which I can play in due time.

Mortimer had stayed to dinner, and he and the baronet played *écarté* afterwards. The butler brought me my coffee into the library, and I took the chance to ask him a few questions.

"Well," said I, "has this precious relation of yours departed, or is he still lurking out yonder?"

12. questionable; dubious, 13. the science that deals with the size, shape etc. of the human skull, 14. stormy

"I don't know, sir. I hope to heaven that he has gone, for he has brought nothing but trouble here! I've not heard of him since I left out food for him last, and that was three days ago."

"Did you see him then?"

"No, sir, but the food was gone when next I went that way."

"Then he was certainly there?"

"So you would think, sir, unless it was the other man who took it."

I sat with my coffee-cup halfway to my lips and stared at Barrymore.

"You know that there is another man then?"

"Yes, sir; there is another man upon the moor."

"Have you seen him?"

"No, sir."

"How do you know of him then?"

"Selden told me of him, sir, a week ago or more. He's in hiding, too, but he's not a convict as far as I can make out. I don't like it, Dr. Watson — I tell you straight, sir, that I don't like it." He spoke with a sudden passion of earnestness.

"Now, listen to me, Barrymore! I have no interest in this matter but that of your master. I have come here with no object except to help him. Tell me, frankly, what it is that you don't like."

Barrymore hesitated for a moment, as if he regretted his outburst or found it difficult to express his own feelings in words.

"It's all these goings-on, sir," he cried at last, waving his hand towards the rain-lashed window which faced the moor. "There's foul play somewhere, and there's black villainy brewing, to that I'll swear! Very glad I should be, sir, to see Sir Henry on his way back to London again!"

"But what is it that alarms you?"

"Look at Sir Charles' death! That was bad enough, for all that the coroner said. Look at the noises on the moor at night. There's not a man would cross it after sundown if he was paid for it. Look at this stranger hiding out yonder, and watching and waiting! What's he waiting for? What does it mean? It means no good to anyone of the name of Baskerville, and very glad I shall be to be quit of it all on the day that Sir Henry's new servants are ready to take over the Hall."

"But about this stranger," said I. "Can you tell me anything about him? What did Selden say? Did he find out where he hid, or what he was doing?"

"He saw him once or twice, but he is a deep one and gives nothing away. At first he thought that he was the police, but soon he found that he had some lay of his own. A kind of gentleman he was, as far as he could see, but what he was doing he could not make out."

"And where did he say that he lived?"

"Among the old houses on the hillside — the stone huts where the old folk used to live."

"But how about his food?"

"Selden found out that he has got a lad who works for him and brings all he needs. I dare say he goes to Coombe Tracey for what he wants."

"Very good, Barrymore. We may talk further of this some other time." When the butler had gone I walked over to the black window, and I looked through a blurred pane at the driving clouds and at the tossing outline of the wind-swept trees. It is a wild night indoors, and what must it be in a stone hut upon the moor. What passion of hatred can it be which leads a man to lurk in such a place at such a

time! And what deep and earnest purpose can he have which calls for such a trial! There, in that hut upon the moor, seems to lie the very centre of that problem which has vexed me so sorely. I swear that another day shall not have passed before I have done all that man can do to reach the heart of the mystery.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. How did Barrymore put his thankfulness forward to Sir Henry when he and Watson assured him positively to call the police. Discuss the case of his fugitive brother-in-law to the police also.
 2. What made Barrymore certain that Sir Charles had gone away to meet a woman at the gate he passed away?
 3. What made Barrymore withhold the information about the letter, addressed to Sir Charles and signed as L.L. from them?
 4. What made him disclose this secret to them at that stage without being asked?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

The literary style of the book changed to an extract from the diary of Dr. Watson having dated entries. On October 16, it was a dark and stormy night, and even Dr. Watson felt doomed. The baronet (Sir Henry) was in a serious and somber mood because of Miss Stapleton.

Watson wrote that he had himself heard the sound of a large dog, baying and howling, but commonsense told him it was a real dog, not a ghost. Local peasants had reported of seeing on the moor a large shining animal with terrible teeth. They believed that to be a

super-natural monster. Watson again told and recorded that he had seen a tall and thin stranger on the moor. Because of the height, it could not have been Frankland or Stapleton. He was convinced that he was being followed by the same person who had followed them in London. Barrymore got angry with Sir Henry for hunting down...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. The weather is dreary, affecting the mood of everyone.
2. The grounded Watson is thinking if the superstitions do after all have some legitimacy behind them.
3. He resolves to keep his plans and findings to himself, so as not to add stress on Sir Henry.
4. Barrymore and Sir Henry have a hot discussion over what should be done about Selden.
5. The butler feels that they should not take advantage of his wife's confession to turn the man in and says that he will cause no problem for the countryside if left alone until he is able to escape on a ship. Eventually, in spite of reservations, Sir Henry agrees.
6. Barrymore shares a piece of information that he previously kept secret out of concern for Sir Charles' reputation.
7. Only one letter from a woman in Coombe Tracey had arrived on that fateful day.
8. The Barrymores had discovered the letter after the death of Sir Charles, mostly burnt but the end still readable. It requested Sir Charles' presence at the gate at 10:00, the time of his death and was signed with the initial L.L.
9. Watson sends the report of this new information to Holmes immediately.

10. The next day has the same bad weather. Watson goes out but no sign of Selden. He catches a ride back from Dr. Mortimer. The doctor is able to supply the name of the L.L.—Laura Lyons.
11. She is Mr. Frankland's daughter but does not concern himself with her much but for supplying her with a small amount of money because of her falling bad marriage.
12. Others in the area, including Stapleton and Sir Charles, have helped her out in starting a typewriting business.
13. Watson gathers more information about the man on the moor. He decides to find the woman next day.
14. Barrymore tells Watson that Selden, who had not been seen for three days, had mentioned that someone else was living out there, the man lived in the ruins of abandoned dwellings and a boy brought him food.

EXERCISE

1. How did Watson gather the information regarding the person who had initialled the letter as L.L.?
2. What was the follow-up action of the discovering of L.L. that Watson took to gather other relevant case in Sir Charles' death?
3. Explain this statement—"So, between the old sinner and the young one the girl has had a pretty bad time."
4. What made Watson decide alone to go to Coombe Tracey rather than taking Sir Henry along with him for questioning Laura Lyons?
5. What made certain to Watson that his problem lay in the hut upon the moor?

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the events, write character-sketch of the following persons and underline their new traits of head and heart explored in this chapter.

1. Sir Henry
2. Dr. Watson
3. Selden
4. Mr. Barrymore
5. Frankland

Chapter 11

The Man on the Tor

The extract from my private diary which forms the last chapter has brought my narrative up to the eighteenth of October, a time when these strange events began to move swiftly towards their terrible conclusion. The incidents of the next few days are indelibly¹ graven² upon my recollection, and I can tell them without reference to the notes made at the time. I start them from the day which succeeded that upon which I had established two facts of great importance, the one that Mrs. Laura Lyons of Coombe Tracey had written to Sir Charles Baskerville and made an appointment with him at the very place and hour that he met his death, the other that the lurking³ man upon the moor was to be found among the stone huts upon the hillside. With these two facts in my possession I felt that either my intelligence or my courage must be deficient if I could not throw some further light upon these dark places.

I had no opportunity to tell the baronet what I had learned about Mrs. Lyons upon the evening before, for Dr. Mortimer remained with him at cards until it was very late. At breakfast, however, I informed him about my discovery and asked him

1. that cannot be erased, 2. deeply impressed; etched, 3. waiting in secret

whether he would care to accompany me to Coombe Tracey. At first he was very eager to come, but on second thoughts it seemed to both of us that if I went alone the results might be better. The more formal we made the visit the less information we might obtain. I left Sir Henry behind, therefore, not without some prickings of conscience, and drove off upon my new quest.

When I reached Coombe Tracey I told Perkins to put up the horses, and I made inquiries for the lady whom I had come to interrogate. I had no difficulty in finding her rooms, which were central and well appointed. A maid showed me in without ceremony, and as I entered the sitting-room a lady, who was sitting before a Remington typewriter, sprang up with a pleasant smile of welcome. Her face fell, however, when she saw that I was a stranger, and she sat down again and asked me the object of my visit.

The first impression left by Mrs. Lyons was one of extreme beauty. Her eyes and hair were of the same rich **hazel**⁴ colour, and her cheeks, though considerably **freckled**⁵, were flushed with the exquisite bloom of the **brunette**⁶, the dainty pink which lurks at the heart of the sulphur rose. Admiration was, I repeat, the first impression. But the second was criticism. There was something subtly⁷ wrong with the face, some coarseness of expression, some hardness, perhaps, of eye, some looseness of lip which marred its perfect beauty. But these, of course, are afterthoughts. At the moment I was simply conscious that I was in the presence of a very handsome woman, and that she was asking me

4. a light brown colour, 5. having small spots or discolouration, 6. of a dark colour (hair, skin, eyes, etc.), 7. difficult to understand

the reasons for my visit. I had not quite understood until that instant how delicate my mission was.

"I have the pleasure," said I, "of knowing your father."

It was a clumsy introduction, and the lady made me feel it. "There is nothing in common between my father and me," she said. "I owe him nothing, and his friends are not mine. If it were not for the late Sir Charles Baskerville and some other kind hearts I might have starved for all that my father cared."

"It was about the late Sir Charles Baskerville that I have come here to see you."

The freckles started out on the lady's face.

"What can I tell you about him?" she asked, and her fingers played nervously over the stops of her typewriter.

"You knew him, did you not?"

"I have already said that I owe a great deal to his kindness. If I am able to support myself it is largely due to the interest which he took in my unhappy situation."

"Did you correspond with him?"

The lady looked quickly up with an angry gleam in her hazel eyes.

"What is the object of these questions?" she asked sharply.

"The object is to avoid a public scandal. It is better that I should ask them here than that the matter should pass outside our control."

She was silent and her face was still very pale. At last she looked up with something reckless and defiant⁸ in her manner.

8. bold

"Well, I'll answer," she said. "What are your questions?"

"Did you correspond with Sir Charles?"

"I certainly wrote to him once or twice to acknowledge his delicacy and his generosity."

"Have you the dates of those letters?"

"No."

"Have you ever met him?"

"Yes, once or twice, when he came into Coombe Tracey. He was a very retiring man, and he preferred to do good by stealth."

"But if you saw him so seldom and wrote so seldom, how did he know enough about your affairs to be able to help you, as you say that he has done?"

She met my difficulty with the utmost readiness.

"There were several gentlemen who knew my sad history and united to help me. One was Mr. Stapleton, a neighbour and intimate friend of Sir Charles. He was exceedingly kind, and it was through him that Sir Charles learned about my affairs."

I knew already that Sir Charles Baskerville had made Stapleton his **almoner**⁹ upon several occasions, so the lady's statement bore the impress of truth upon it.

"Did you ever write to Sir Charles asking him to meet you?" I continued.

Mrs. Lyons flushed with anger again.

"Really, sir, this is a very extraordinary question."

"I am sorry, madam, but I must repeat it."

"Then I answer, certainly not."

"Not on the very day of Sir Charles' death?"

9. a person in charge of someone's charity work

The flush had faded in an instant, and a deathly face was before me. Her dry lips could not speak the "No" which I saw rather than heard.

"Surely your memory deceives you," said I. "I could even quote a passage of your letter. It ran 'Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock.'"

I thought that she had fainted, but she recovered herself by a supreme effort.

"Is there no such thing as a gentleman?" she gasped.

"You do Sir Charles an injustice. He did burn the letter. But sometimes a letter may be legible even when burned. You acknowledge now that you wrote it?"

"Yes, I did write it," she cried, pouring out her soul in a torrent¹⁰ of words. "I did write it. Why should I deny it? I have no reason to be ashamed of it. I wished him to help me. I believed that if I had an interview I could gain his help, so I asked him to meet me."

"But why at such an hour?"

"Because I had only just learned that he was going to London next day and might be away for months. There were reasons why I could not get there earlier."

"But why a rendezvous¹¹ in the garden instead of a visit to the house?"

"Do you think a woman could go alone at that hour to a bachelor's house?"

"Well, what happened when you did get there?"

"I never went."

"Mrs. Lyons!"

10. flood or down pour, 11. meeting point

"No, I swear it to you on all I hold sacred. I never went. Something intervened to prevent my going."

"What was that?"

"That is a private matter. I cannot tell it."

"You acknowledge then that you made an appointment with Sir Charles at the very hour and place at which he met his death, but you deny that you kept the appointment."

"That is the truth."

Again and again I cross-questioned her, but I could never get past that point.

"Mrs. Lyons," said I as I rose from this long and inconclusive interview, "you are taking a very great responsibility and putting yourself in a very false position by not making an absolutely clean breast of all that you know. If I have to call in the aid of the police you will find how seriously you are compromised. If your position is innocent, why did you in the first instance deny having written to Sir Charles upon that date?"

"Because I feared that some false conclusion might be drawn from it and that I might find myself involved in a scandal."

"And why were you so pressing that Sir Charles should destroy your letter?"

"If you have read the letter you will know."

"I did not say that I had read all the letter."

"You quoted some of it."

"I quoted the postscript. The letter had, as I said, been burned and it was not all legible. I ask you once again why it was that you were so pressing that Sir Charles should destroy this letter which he received on the day of his death."

"The matter is a very private one."

"The more reason why you should avoid a public investigation."

"I will tell you, then. If you have heard anything of my unhappy history you will know that I made a rash marriage and had reason to regret it."

"I have heard so much."

"My life has been one incessant¹² persecution from a husband whom I abhor¹³. The law is upon his side, and every day I am faced by the possibility that he may force me to live with him. At the time that I wrote this letter to Sir Charles I had learned that there was a prospect of my regaining my freedom if certain expenses could be met. It meant everything to me — peace of mind, happiness, self-respect — everything. I knew Sir Charles' generosity, and I thought that if he heard the story from my own lips he would help me."

"Then how is it that you did not go?"

"Because I received help in the interval from another source."

"Why then, did you not write to Sir Charles and explain this?"

"So I should have done had I not seen his death in the paper next morning."

The woman's story hung coherently together, and all my questions were unable to shake it. I could only check it by finding if she had, indeed, instituted divorce proceedings against her husband at or about the time of the tragedy.

It was unlikely that she would dare to say that she had not been to Baskerville Hall if she really had been, for a trap would be necessary to take her

12. non-stop, 13. hate

there, and could not have returned to Coombe Tracey until the early hours of the morning. Such an excursion could not be kept secret. The probability was, therefore, that she was telling the truth, or, at least, a part of the truth. I came away baffled and disheartened. Once again I had reached that dead wall which seemed to be built across every path by which I tried to get at the object of my mission. And yet the more I thought of the lady's face and of her manner the more I felt that something was being held back from me. Why should she turn so pale? Why should she fight against every admission until it was forced from her? Why should she have been so reticent at the time of the tragedy? Surely the explanation of all this could not be as innocent as she would have me believe. For the moment I could proceed no farther in that direction, but must turn back to that other clue which was to be sought for among the stone huts upon the moor.

And that was a most vague direction. I realized it as I drove back and noted how hill after hill showed traces of the ancient people. Barrymore's only indication had been that the stranger lived in one of these abandoned huts, and many hundreds of them are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the moor. But I had my own experience for a guide since it had shown me the man himself standing upon the summit of the Black Tor. That, then, should be the centre of my search. From there I should explore every hut upon the moor until I lighted upon the right one. If this man were inside it I should find out from his own lips, at the point of my revolver if necessary, who he was and why he had dogged us so long. He might slip away from us in the crowd of Regent

Street, but it would puzzle him to do so upon the lonely moor. On the other hand, if I should find the hut and its tenant should not be within it I must remain there, however long the vigil, until he returned. Holmes had missed him in London. It would indeed be a triumph for me if I could run him to earth where my master had failed.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Mrs. Laura Lyons spring up with a cheerful smile of welcome when Watson was shown in by her maid? Who, in your opinion, she was expecting before she actually saw the face of Watson?
 2. Why was Laura irritated with Watson for asking his questions regarding Sir Charles in the inception?
 3. What made Laura write letters to Sir Charles of Baskerville as reported by her?
 4. What made Laura not inform Sir Charles of Baskerville regarding the assistance she had got from another source?
 5. How did Watson jump at the conclusion that whatever Laura Lyons had told him was the truth, or, at least, a part of truth?
-

Luck had been against us again and again in this inquiry, but now at last it came to my aid. And the messenger of good fortune was none other than Mr. Frankland, who was standing, gray-whiskered and red-faced, outside the gate of his garden, which opened on to the highroad along which I travelled.

"Good-day, Dr. Watson," cried he with unwanted good humour, "you must really give your horses a rest and come in to have a glass of wine and to congratulate me."

My feelings towards him were very far from being friendly after what I had heard of his treatment of his daughter, but I was anxious to send Perkins and the wagonette home, and the opportunity was a good one. I alighted and sent a message to Sir Henry that I should walk over in time for dinner. Then I followed Frankland into his dining-room.

"It is a great day for me, sir — one of the red-letter days of my life," he cried with many chuckles. "I have brought off a double event. I mean to teach them in these parts that law is law, and that there is a man here who does not fear to invoke it. I have established a right of way through the centre of old Middleton's park, slap across it, sir, within a hundred yards of his own front door. What do you think of that? We'll teach these **magnates**¹⁴ that they cannot ride **roughshod**¹⁵ over the rights of the commoners, **confound**¹⁶ them! And I've closed the wood where the Fernworthy folk used to picnic. These infernal people seem to think that there are no rights of property, and that they can swarm where they like with their papers and their bottles. Both cases decided Dr. Watson, and both in my favour. I haven't had such a day since I had Sir John Morland for trespass because he shot in his own warren."

"How on earth did you do that?"

"Look it up in the books, sir. It will repay reading — Frankland v. Morland, Court of Queen's Bench. It cost me 200 pounds, but I got my verdict."

"Did it do you any good?"

"None, sir, none. I am proud to say that I had no interest in the matter. I act entirely from a sense of public

14. people of the upper class, 15. to treat harshly; override,
16. amazed; confused

duty. I have no doubt, for example, that the Fernworthy people will burn me in effigy tonight. I told the police last time they did it that they should stop these disgraceful exhibitions. The County Constabulary¹⁷ is in a scandalous state, sir, and it has not afforded me the protection to which I am entitled. The case of Frankland v. Regina will bring the matter before the attention of the public. I told them that they would have occasion to regret their treatment of me, and already my words have come true."

"How so?" I asked.

The old man put on a very knowing expression.

"Because I could tell them what they are dying to know; but nothing would induce me to help the rascals in any way."

I had been casting round for some excuse by which I could get away from his gossip, but now I began to wish to hear more of it. I had seen enough of the contrary nature of the old sinner to understand that any strong sign of interest would be the surest way to stop his confidences.

"Some poaching¹⁸ case, no doubt?" said I with an indifferent manner.

"Ha, ha, my boy, a very much more important matter than that! What about the convict on the moor?"

I stared. "You don't mean that you know where he is?" said I.

"I may not know exactly where he is, but I am quite sure that I could help the police to lay their hands on him. Has it never struck you that the way

17. the body of constables of a district, 18. encroaching on another's property

to catch that man was to find out where he got his food and so trace it to him?"

He certainly seemed to be getting uncomfortably near the truth. "No doubt," said I; "but how do you know that he is anywhere upon the moor?"

"I know it because I have seen with my own eyes the messenger who takes him his food."

My heart sank for Barrymore. It was a serious thing to be in the power of this spiteful old busybody. But his next remark took a weight from my mind.

"You'll be surprised to hear that his food is taken to him by a child. I see him every day through my telescope upon the roof. He passes along the same path at the same hour, and to whom should he be going except to the convict?"

Here was luck indeed! And yet I suppressed all appearance of interest. A child! Barrymore had said that our unknown was supplied by a boy. It was on his track, and not upon the convict's, that Frankland had stumbled. If I could get his knowledge it might save me a long and weary hunt. But incredulity¹⁹ and indifference were evidently my strongest cards.

"I should say that it was much more likely that it was the son of one of the moorland shepherds taking out his father's dinner."

The least appearance of opposition struck fire out of the old autocrat. His eyes looked malignantly at me, and his gray whiskers bristled like those of an angry cat.

"Indeed, sir!" said he, pointing out over the wide-stretching moor. "Do you see that Black Tor over yonder? Well, do you see the low hill beyond with

19. disbelief

the thornbush upon it? It is the stoniest part of the whole moor. Is that a place where a shepherd would be likely to take his station? Your suggestion, sir, is a most absurd one."

I meekly answered that I had spoken without knowing all the facts. My submission pleased him and led him to further confidences.

"You may be sure, sir, that I have very good grounds before I come to an opinion. I have seen the boy again and again with his bundle. Every day, and sometimes twice a day, I have been able — but wait a moment, Dr. Watson. Do my eyes deceive me, or is there at the present moment something moving upon that hillside?"

It was several miles off, but I could distinctly see a small dark dot against the dull green and gray.

"Come, sir, come!" cried Frankland, rushing upstairs. "You will see with your own eyes and judge for yourself."

The telescope, a formidable instrument mounted upon a tripod, stood upon the flat leads of the house. Frankland clapped his eye to it and gave a cry of satisfaction.

"Quick, Dr. Watson, quick, before he passes over the hill!"

There he was, sure enough, a small urchin with a little bundle upon his shoulder, toiling slowly up the hill. When he reached the crest I saw the ragged uncouth figure outlined for an instant against the cold blue sky. He looked round him with a furtive and stealthy air, as one who dreads pursuit. Then he vanished over the hill.

"Well! Am I right?"

"Certainly, there is a boy who seems to have some secret errand²⁰."

"And what the errand is even a county constable could guess. But not one word shall they have from me, and I bind you to secrecy also, Dr. Watson. Not a word! You understand!"

"Just as you wish."

"They have treated me shamefully — shamefully. When the facts come out in Frankland v. Regina I venture to think that a thrill of indignation will run through the country. Nothing would induce me to help the police in any way. For all they cared it might have been me, instead of my effigy, which these rascals burned at the stake. Surely you are not going! You will help me to empty the decanter in honour of this great occasion!"

But I resisted all his solicitations and succeeded in dissuading him from his announced intention of walking home with me. I kept the road as long as his eye was on me, and then I struck off across the moor and made for the stony hill over which the boy had disappeared. Everything was working in my favour, and I swore that it should not be through lack of energy or perseverance that I should miss the chance which fortune had thrown in my way.

The sun was already sinking when I reached the summit of the hill, and the long slopes beneath me were all golden-green on one side and gray shadow on the other. A haze lay low upon the farthest skyline, out of which jutted the fantastic shapes of Belliver and Vixen Tor. Over the wide expanse there was no sound and no movement. One great gray bird,

20. special work

a gull or curlew, soared aloft in the blue heaven. He and I seemed to be the only living things between the huge arch of the sky and the desert beneath it. The barren scene, the sense of loneliness, and the mystery and urgency of my task all struck a chill into my heart. The boy was nowhere to be seen. But down beneath me in a cleft²¹ of the hills there was a circle of the old stone huts, and in the middle of them there was one which retained sufficient roof to act as a screen against the weather. My heart leaped within me as I saw it. This must be the burrow where the stranger lurked²². At last my foot was on the threshold of his hiding place — his secret was within my grasp.

As I approached the hut, walking as warily²³ as Stapleton would do when with poised net he drew near the settled butterfly, I satisfied myself that the place had indeed been used as a habitation. A vague pathway among the boulders led to the dilapidated²⁴ opening which served as a door. All was silent within. The unknown might be lurking there, or he might be prowling²⁵ on the moor. My nerves tingled with the sense of adventure. Throwing aside my cigarette, I closed my hand upon the butt of my revolver and, walking swiftly up to the door, I looked in. The place was empty.

But there were ample signs that I had not come upon a false scent. This was certainly where the man lived. Some blankets rolled in a waterproof lay upon that very stone slab upon which neolithic man had once slumbered. The ashes of a fire were heaped in a

21. hollow area, 22. remain in a place secretly, 23. carefully; cautiously,
24. reduced to ruin due to neglect, 25. to go about stealthily

rude grate. Beside it lay some cooking utensils and a bucket half-full of water. A litter of empty tins showed that the place had been occupied for some time, and I saw, as my eyes became accustomed to²⁶ the checkered light, a **pannikin**²⁷ and a half-full bottle of spirits standing in the corner. In the middle of the hut a flat stone served the purpose of a table, and upon this stood a small cloth bundle — the same, no doubt, which I had seen through the telescope upon the shoulder of the boy. It contained a loaf of bread, a tinned tongue, and two tins of preserved peaches. As I set it down again, after having examined it, my heart leaped to see that beneath it there lay a sheet of paper with writing upon it. I raised it, and this was what I read, roughly scrawled²⁸ in pencil: "Dr. Watson has gone to Coombe Tracey."

For a minute I stood there with the paper in my hands thinking out the meaning of this curt message. It was I, then, and not Sir Henry, who was being dogged by this secret man. He had not followed me himself, but he had set an agent — the boy, perhaps — upon my track, and this was his report. Possibly I had taken no step since I had been upon the moor which had not been observed and reported. Always there was this feeling of an unseen force, a fine net drawn round us with infinite skill and delicacy, holding us so lightly that it was only at some supreme moment that one realized that one was indeed entangled in its meshes.

If there was one report there might be others, so I looked round the hut in search of them. There was no trace, however, of anything of the kind, nor could

26. used to, 27. small pan or metal cup, 28. scribbled

I discover any sign which might indicate the character or intentions of the man who lived in this singular place, save that he must be of Spartan²⁹ habits and cared little for the comforts of life. When I thought of the heavy rains and looked at the gaping roof I understood how strong and immutable³⁰ must be the purpose which had kept him in that inhospitable abode. Was he our malignant enemy, or was he by chance our guardian angel? I swore that I would not leave the hut until I knew.

Outside the sun was sinking low and the west was blazing with scarlet and gold. Its reflection was shot back in ruddy patches by the distant pools which lay amid the great Grimpen Mire. There were the two towers of Baskerville Hall, and there a distant blur of smoke which marked the village of Grimpen. Between the two, behind the hill, was the house of the Stapletons. All was sweet and mellow and peaceful in the golden evening light, and yet as I looked at them my soul shared none of the peace of Nature but quivered at the vagueness and the terror of that interview which every instant was bringing nearer. With tingling nerves but a fixed purpose, I sat in the dark recess of the hut and waited with sombre³¹ patience for the coming of its tenant.

And then at last I heard him. Far away came the sharp clink of a boot striking upon a stone. Then another and yet another, coming nearer and nearer. I shrank back into the darkest corner and cocked the pistol in my pocket, determined not to discover myself until I had an opportunity of seeing something

29. disciplined and simple, 30. changeless; unchangeable,
31. extremely serious, grave

of the stranger. There was a long pause which showed that he had stopped. Then once more the footsteps approached and a shadow fell across the opening of the hut.

"It is a lovely evening, my dear Watson," said a well-known voice. "I really think that you will be more comfortable outside than in."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Watson decide to step into Frankland's dining room even after knowing regarding his ill-treatment along with his daughter, Laura Lyons?
 2. What sort of man did Frankland project himself to Watson, and why?
 3. What does he say to Watson regarding to convict on the moor?
 4. How did Frankland notice about the movement of the food supply, etc. to the convict?
 5. What made Watson refuse Frankland's offer of walking home with him?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

The extract from Watson's diary had brought the narrative up to the eighteen October. The incidents were groven upon his collections. Watson had established two things; the first was that Laura Lyons was to have met Sir Charles at ten o'clock by Yew alley and the second that the new stranger on the moor lived near the stone huts. He decided to visit Laura Lyons in Coombe Tracey and that the meeting would go better without Sir Henry being there. Laura Lyons was surprised to see a stranger

when Watson arrived. She was working at a Remington typewriter. Watson's first impression was one of beauty but at a second glance, Laura had such a roughness and hardness that marred her features.

Watson began by saying that he was acquainted with her father, Frankland. Laura replied that her father had disowned her and without Sir Charles' help, she would be totally dejected by then. Watson further questioned Laura about the night of the death of Sir Charles. At first she was shocked and refused to answer but then replied...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Watson tells Sir Henry about L.L. as Mrs. Laura Lyons and invites him along to pay her a visit and would be best if he went unaccompanied.
2. The woman, described by Watson as a flawed beauty in on her guard when he arrives.
3. After repeated questions, she admits to have written the letter.
4. Sir Charles had already become familiar with her situation through the sympathetic Stapleton and she believed that if was able to talk to him directly, he would help her in getting her freedom from her husband.
5. Mrs. Lyons insists that she did not go to meet at the appointed time, claiming that she received the help she needed from someone else before it.
6. Watson, on his way back to the Hall, is stopped by Frankland, who asks him to go inside and celebrate with him.
7. Watson accepts the invite, as a chance to send off the wagonette and driver to carry out his investigations in secret.

8. Frankland helps him in this cause.
9. Watson finds out from the old man that a boy carrying food goes to a place just beyond the Black Tor (high rocky hill).
10. Frankland is incorrect in believing that the food is going to the convict.
11. Watson goes looking for the mysterious man's hideout, in an ancient house with its roof intact. The man is not in but his belongings are there, including the package that the boy has just brought him. There is a note briefly reporting on Watson's activities for the day.
12. Watson waits for him to return in the ancient house. Watson hears steps, stopping, and then the figure of a man appears in the doorway.
13. Watson knows the man quite well.

EXERCISE

1. Discuss briefly about the two facts that Watson had successfully established before going to Coombe Tracey to question Laura Lyons.
2. What made Laura Lyons answer all the questions hesitating and in a clear avoiding manner, after being asked by Watson with her on his visit to Coombe Tracey? Explain with suitable reasons.
3. What made Laura Coombe Tracey say that she did not visit to see Sir Charles on the appointed day, as she had pleaded him very hard for this meeting? Is her statement believable? Explain your belief with suitable reasons.
4. What made Laura feel nervous all through her interview with Watson regarding Sir Charles, though she showed her thankfulness to Sir Charles twice or thrice during the interview for all his assistance in establishing his stand on her own

feet? What kind of doubt comes to your mind regarding her role in Sir Charles' death.

5. How does Watson gather information about the lurking man upon the moor?
6. Who could have been that familiar voice that said, "It is a lovely evening, my dear Watson"?

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the chapter events, write down the character-sketches of the following persons, underlining their new traits of head and heart explored in this chapter:

1. Sir Henry
2. Dr. Watson
3. Mrs. Laura Lyons
4. Mr. Frankland

Chapter 12

Death on the Moor

For a moment or two I sat breathless, hardly able to believe my ears. Then my senses and my voice came back to me, while a crushing weight of responsibility seemed in an instant to be lifted from my soul. That cold, incisive¹, ironical voice could belong to but one man in all the world.

"Holmes!" I cried — "Holmes!"

"Come out," said he, "and please be careful with the revolver."

I stooped under the rude lintel², and there he sat upon a stone outside, his gray eyes dancing with amusement as they fell upon my astonished features. He was thin and worn, but clear and alert, his keen face bronzed by the sun and roughened by the wind. In his tweed suit and cloth cap he looked like any other tourist upon the moor, and he had contrived³, with that catlike love of personal cleanliness which was one of his characteristics, that his chin should be as smooth and his linen as perfect as if he were in Baker Street.

"I never was more glad to see anyone in my life," said I as I wrung him by the hand.

"Or more astonished, eh?"

"Well, I must confess to it."

1. cutting, 2. beam; support, 3. managed

"The surprise was not all on one side, I assure you. I had no idea that you had found my occasional retreat⁴, still less that you were inside it, until I was within twenty paces of the door."

"My footprint, I presume?"

"No, Watson, I fear that I could not undertake to recognize your footprint amid all the footprints of the world. If you seriously desire to deceive me you must change your tobacconist; for when I see the stub of a cigarette marked Bradley, Oxford Street, I know that my friend Watson is in the neighbourhood. You will see it there beside the path. You threw it down, no doubt, at that supreme moment when you charged into the empty hut."

"Exactly."

"I thought as much — and knowing your admirable tenacity⁵ I was convinced that you were sitting in ambush⁶, a weapon within reach, waiting for the tenant to return. So you actually thought that I was the criminal?"

"I did not know who you were, but I was determined to find out."

"Excellent, Watson! And how did you localize me? You saw me, perhaps, on the night of the convict hunt, when I was so imprudent as to allow the moon to rise behind me?"

"Yes, I saw you then."

"And have no doubt searched all the huts until you came to this one?"

"No, your boy had been observed, and that gave me a guide where to look."

"The old gentleman with the telescope, no doubt. I could not make it out when first I saw the light

4. a pace of privacy, 5. persistence, 6. waiting in hiding to attack by surprise

flashing upon the lens." He rose and peeped into the hut. "Ha, I see that Cartwright has brought up some supplies. What's this paper? So you have been to Coombe Tracey, have you?"

"Yes."

"To see Mrs. Laura Lyons?"

"Exactly."

"Well done! Our researches have evidently been running on parallel lines, and when we unite our results I expect we shall have a fairly full knowledge of the case."

"Well, I am glad from my heart that you are here, for indeed the responsibility and the mystery were both becoming too much for my nerves. But how in the name of wonder did you come here, and what have you been doing? I thought that you were in Baker Street working out that case of blackmailing."

"That was what I wished you to think."

"Then you use me, and yet do not trust me!" I cried with some bitterness. "I think that I have deserved better at your hands, Holmes."

"My dear fellow, you have been invaluable to me in this as in many other cases, and I beg that you will forgive me if I have seemed to play a trick upon you. In truth, it was partly for your own sake that I did it, and it was my appreciation of the danger which you ran which led me to come down and examine the matter for myself. Had I been with Sir Henry and you it is confident that my point of view would have been the same as yours, and my presence would have warned our very formidable opponents to be on their guard. As it is, I have been able to get about as I could not possibly have done had I been living in the Hall, and I remain an unknown factor in the business, ready to throw in all my weight at a critical moment."

"But why keep me in the dark?"

"For you to know could not have helped us and might possibly have led to my discovery. You would have wished to tell me something, or in your kindness you would have brought me out some comfort or other, and so an unnecessary risk would be run. I brought Cartwright down with me — you remember the little chap at the express office — and he has seen after my simple wants: a loaf of bread and a clean collar. What does man want more? He has given me an extra pair of eyes upon a very active pair of feet, and both have been invaluable."

"Then my reports have all been wasted!" — My voice trembled as I recalled the pains and the pride with which I had composed them.

Holmes took a bundle of papers from his pocket.

"Here are your reports, my dear fellow, and very well thumbed, I assure you. I made excellent arrangements, and they are only delayed one day upon their way. I must compliment you exceedingly upon the zeal and the intelligence which you have shown over an extraordinarily difficult case."

I was still rather raw over the deception which had been practised upon me, but the warmth of Holmes' praise drove my anger from my mind. I felt also in my heart that he was right in what he said and that it was really best for our purpose that I should not have known that he was upon the moor.

"That's better," said he, seeing the shadow rise from my face. "And now tell me the result of your visit to Mrs. Laura Lyons — it was not difficult for me to guess that it was to see her that you had gone, for I am already aware that she is the one person in Coombe Tracey who might be of service to us in the

matter. In fact, if you had not gone today it is exceedingly probable that I should have gone to-morrow."

The sun had set and dusk was settling over the moor. The air had turned chill and we withdrew into the hut for warmth. There sitting together in the twilight, I told Holmes of my conversation with the lady. So interested was he that I had to repeat some of it twice before he was satisfied.

"This is most important," said he when I had concluded. "It fills up a gap which I had been unable to bridge in this most complex affair. You are aware, perhaps, that a close intimacy exists between this lady and the man Stapleton?"

"I did not know of a close intimacy."

"There can be no doubt about the matter. They meet, they write, there is a complete understanding between them. Now, this puts a very powerful weapon into our hands. If I could only use it to detach his wife—"

"His wife?"

"I am giving you some information now, in return for all that you have given me. The lady who has passed here as Miss Stapleton is in reality his wife."

"Good heavens, Holmes! Are you sure of what you say? How could he have permitted Sir Henry to fall in love with her?"

"Sir Henry's falling in love could do no harm to anyone except Sir Henry. He took particular care that Sir Henry did not make love to her, as you have yourself observed. I repeat that the lady is his wife and not his sister."

"But why this elaborate deception?"

"Because he foresaw that she would be very much more useful to him in the character of a free woman."

All my unspoken instincts, my vague suspicions, suddenly took shape and centred upon the naturalist. In that impassive colourless man, with his straw hat and his butterfly-net, I seemed to see something terrible — a creature of infinite patience and craft, with a smiling face and a murderous heart.

"It is he, then, who is our enemy — it is he who dogged us in London?"

"So I read the riddle."

"And the warning — it must have come from her!"

"Exactly."

The shape of some monstrous villainy, half seen, half guessed, loomed through the darkness which had girt me so long.

"But are you sure of this, Holmes? How do you know that the woman is his wife?"

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Watson feel so happy and excited to see Sherlock Holmes in the moor?
2. How could Holmes identify the presence of Watson on the moor?
3. What did Watson take Holmes for when he charged into the empty hut?
4. What made Holmes keep his presence on the moor a top secret even from his friend, Watson?
5. What secrecy did Holmes unearth to Watson regarding the relationship between Mr. Stapleton and Miss Stapleton?
6. What made Stapleton introduce the so-called Miss Stapleton as his sister and not as his wife?

"Because he so far forgot himself as to tell you a true piece of autobiography upon the occasion when

he first met you, and I dare say he has many a time regretted it since. He was once a schoolmaster in the north of England. Now, there is no one more easy to trace than a schoolmaster. There are scholastic agencies by which one may identify any man who has been in the profession. A little investigation showed me that a school had come to grief under atrocious⁷ circumstances, and that the man who had owned it — the name was different — had disappeared with his wife. The descriptions agreed. When I learned that the missing man was devoted to entomology⁸ the identification was complete."

The darkness was rising, but much was still hidden by the shadows.

"If this woman is in truth his wife, where does Mrs. Laura Lyons come in?" I asked.

"That is one of the points upon which your own researches have shed a light. Your interview with the lady has cleared the situation very much. I did not know about a projected divorce between herself and her husband. In that case, regarding Stapleton as an unmarried man, she counted no doubt upon becoming his wife."

"And when she is undeceived?"

"Why, then we may find the lady of service. It must be our first duty to see her — both of us — to-morrow. Don't you think, Watson, that you are away from your charge rather long? Your place should be at Baskerville Hall."

The last red streaks had faded away in the west and night had settled upon the moor. A few faint stars were gleaming in a violet sky.

7. shockingly brutal or cruel, 8. the branch of zoology dealing with insects

"One last question, Holmes," I said as I rose. "Surely there is no need of secrecy between you and me. What is the meaning of it all? What is he after?"

Holmes' voice sank as he answered:

"It is murder, Watson — refined, cold-blooded, deliberate murder. Do not ask me for particulars. My nets are closing upon him, even as his are upon Sir Henry, and with your help he is already almost at my mercy. There is but one danger which can threaten us. It is that he should strike before we are ready to do so. Another day — two at the most — and I have my case complete, but until then guard your charge as closely as ever a fond mother watched her ailing child. Your mission today has justified itself, and yet I could almost wish that you had not left his side. Hark⁹!"

A terrible scream — a prolonged yell of horror and anguish burst out of the silence of the moor. That frightful cry turned the blood to ice in my veins.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped. "What is it? What does it mean?"

Holmes had sprung to his feet, and I saw his dark, athletic outline at the door of the hut, his shoulders stooping, his head thrust forward, his face peering into the darkness.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Hush!"

The cry had been loud on account of its vehemence¹⁰, but it had pealed out from somewhere far off on the shadowy plain. Now it burst upon our ears, nearer, louder, more urgent than before.

"Where is it?" Holmes whispered; and I knew from the thrill of his voice that he, the man of iron, was shaken to the soul. "Where is it, Watson?"

9. listen. 10. passion; intensity

"There, I think." I pointed into the darkness.

"No, there!"

Again the agonized cry swept through the silent night, louder and much nearer than ever. And a new sound mingled with it, a deep, muttered rumble, musical and yet menacing, rising and falling like the low, constant murmur of the sea.

"The hound!" cried Holmes. "Come, Watson, come! Great heavens, if we are too late!"

He had started running swiftly over the moor, and I had followed at his heels. But now from somewhere among the broken ground immediately in front of us there came one last despairing yell, and then a dull, heavy thud. We halted and listened. Not another sound broke the heavy silence of the windless night.

I saw Holmes put his hand to his forehead like a man distracted. He stamped his feet upon the ground.

"He has beaten us, Watson. We are too late."

"No, no, surely not!"

"Fool that I was to hold my hand. And you, Watson, see what comes of abandoning your charge! But, by Heaven, if the worst has happened we'll avenge him!"

Blindly we ran through the gloom, blundering against boulders, forcing our way through gorse¹¹ bushes, panting up hills and rushing down slopes, heading always in the direction whence those dreadful sounds had come. At every rise Holmes looked eagerly round him, but the shadows were thick upon the moor, and nothing moved upon its dreary face.

11. a spiny shrub

"Can you see anything?"

"Nothing."

"But, hark, what is that?"

A low moan had fallen upon our ears. There it was again upon our left! On that side a ridge of rocks ended in a sheer cliff which overlooked a stone-strewn slope. On its jagged face was spread-eagled some dark, irregular object. As we ran towards it the vague outline hardened into a definite shape. It was a **prostrate**¹² man face downward upon the ground, the head doubled under him at a horrible angle, the shoulders rounded and the body hunched together as if in the act of throwing a somersault. So **grotesque**¹³ was the attitude that I could not for the instant realize that that moan had been the passing of his soul. Not a whisper, not a rustle, rose now from the dark figure over which we stooped. Holmes laid his hand upon him and held it up again with an exclamation of horror. The gleam of the match which he struck shone upon his clotted fingers and upon the ghastly pool which widened slowly from the crushed skull of the victim. And it shone upon something else which turned our hearts sick and faint within us — the body of Sir Henry Baskerville!

There was no chance of either of us forgetting that peculiar ruddy tweed suit — the very one which he had worn on the first morning that we had seen him in Baker Street. We caught the one clear glimpse of it, and then the match flickered and went out, even as the hope had gone out of our souls. Holmes groaned, and his face glimmered white through the darkness.

12. lying flat on the ground, 13. extremely ugly

"The brute! the brute!" I cried with clenched hands. "Oh Holmes, I shall never forgive myself for having left him to his fate."

"I am more to blame than you, Watson. In order to have my case well rounded and complete, I have thrown away the life of my client. It is the greatest blow which has befallen me in my career. But how could I know — how could I know — that he would risk his life alone upon the moor in the face of all my warnings?"

"That we should have heard his screams — my God, those screams! — and yet have been unable to save him! Where is this brute of a hound which drove him to his death? It may be lurking among these rocks at this instant. And Stapleton, where is he? He shall answer for this deed."

"He shall. I will see to that. Uncle and nephew have been murdered — the one frightened to death by the very sight of a beast which he thought to be supernatural, the other driven to his end in his wild flight to escape from it. But now we have to prove the connection between the man and the beast. Save from what we heard, we cannot even swear to the existence of the latter, since Sir Henry has evidently died from the fall. But, by heavens, cunning as he is, the fellow shall be in my power before another day is past!"

We stood with bitter hearts on either side of the mangled¹⁴ body, overwhelmed by this sudden and irrevocable¹⁵ disaster which had brought all our long and weary labours to so piteous an end. Then as the moon rose we climbed to the top of the rocks

14. disfigured; injured severely, 15. unalterable; unable to be changed

over which our poor friend had fallen, and from the summit we gazed out over the shadowy moor, half silver and half gloom. Far away, miles off, in the direction of Grimpen, a single steady yellow light was shining. It could only come from the lonely abode of the Stapletons. With a bitter curse I shook my fist at it as I gazed.

"Why should we not seize him at once?"

"Our case is not complete. The fellow is wary and cunning to the last degree. It is not what we know, but what we can prove. If we make one false move the villain may escape us yet."

"What can we do?"

"There will be plenty for us to do tomorrow. To-night we can only perform the last offices to our poor friend."

Together we made our way down the precipitous¹⁶ slope and approached the body, black and clear against the silvered stones. The agony of those contorted¹⁷ limbs struck me with a spasm¹⁸ of pain and blurred my eyes with tears.

"We must send for help, Holmes! We cannot carry him all the way to the Hall. Good heavens, are you mad?"

He had uttered a cry and bent over the body. Now he was dancing and laughing and wringing my hand. Could this be my stern, self-contained friend? These were hidden fires, indeed!

"A beard! A beard! The man has a beard!"

"A beard?"

"It is not the baronet — it is — why, it is my neighbour, the convict!"

16. sleep, 17. twisted; out of shape, 18. involuntary muscular contraction

With feverish haste we had turned the body over, and that dripping beard was pointing up to the cold, clear moon. There could be no doubt about the beetling¹⁹ forehead, the sunken animal eyes. It was indeed the same face which had glared upon me in the light of the candle from over the rock — the face of Selden, the criminal.

Then in an instant it was all clear to me. I remembered how the baronet had told me that he had handed his old wardrobe to Barrymore. Barrymore had passed it on in order to help Selden in his escape. Boots, shirt, cap — it was all Sir Henry's. The tragedy was still black enough, but this man had at least deserved death by the laws of his country. I told Holmes how the matter stood, my heart bubbling over with thankfulness and joy.

"Then the clothes have been the poor devil's death," said he. "It is clear enough that the hound has been laid on from some article of Sir Henry's — the boot which was abstracted²⁰ in the hotel, in all probability — and so ran this man down. There is one very singular thing, however: How came Selden, in the darkness, to know that the hound was on his trail?"

"He heard him."

"To hear a hound upon the moor would not work a hard man like this convict into such a paroxysm²¹ of terror that he would risk recapture by screaming wildly for help. By his cries he must have run a long way after he knew the animal was on his track. How did he know?"

"A greater mystery to me is why this hound, presuming that all our conjectures²² are correct — "

19. projecting, 20. removed or stolen, 21. any sudden, violent outburst, 22. opinions

"I presume nothing."

"Well, then, why this hound should be loose to-night. I suppose that it does not always run loose upon the moor. Stapleton would not let it go unless he had reason to think that Sir Henry would be there."

"My difficulty is the more formidable²³ of the two, for I think that we shall very shortly get an explanation of yours, while mine may remain forever a mystery. The question now is, what shall we do with this poor wretch's body? We cannot leave it here to the foxes and the ravens."

"I suggest that we put it in one of the huts until we can communicate with the police."

"Exactly. I have no doubt that you and I could carry it so far. Halloa, Watson, what's this? It's the man himself, by all that's wonderful and audacious! Not a word to show your suspicions — 'not a word, or my plans crumble to the ground.'"

A figure was approaching us over the moor, and I saw the dull red glow of a cigar. The moon shone upon him, and I could distinguish the dapper²⁴ shape and jaunty²⁵ walk of the naturalist. He stopped when he saw us, and then came on again.

"Why, Dr. Watson, that's not you, is it? You are the last man that I should have expected to see out on the moor at this time of night. But, dear me, what's this? Somebody hurt? Not — don't tell me that it is our friend Sir Henry!" He hurried past me and stooped over the dead man. I heard a sharp intake of his breath and the cigar fell from his fingers.

"Who — who's this?" he stammered.

"It is Selden, the man who escaped from Princetown."

23. discouraging, 24. smart; neat; trim, 25. easy and sprightly

Stapleton turned a ghastly face upon us, but by a supreme effort he had overcome his amazement and his disappointment. He looked sharply from Holmes to me. "Dear me! What a very shocking affair! How did he die?"

"He appears to have broken his neck by falling over these rocks. My friend and I were strolling on the moor when we heard a cry."

"I heard a cry also. That was what brought me out. I was uneasy about Sir Henry."

"Why about Sir Henry in particular?" I could not help asking.

"Because I had suggested that he should come over. When he did not come I was surprised, and I naturally became alarmed for his safety when I heard cries upon the moor. By the way" — his eyes darted again from my face to Holmes' — "did you hear anything else besides a cry?"

"No," said Holmes; "did you?"

"No."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Oh, you know the stories that the peasants tell about a phantom hound, and so on. It is said to be heard at night upon the moor. I was wondering if there were any evidence of such a sound tonight."

"We heard nothing of the kind," said I.

"And what is your theory of this poor fellow's death?"

"I have no doubt that anxiety and exposure have driven him off his head. He has rushed about the moor in a crazy state and eventually fallen over here and broken his neck."

"That seems the most reasonable theory," said Stapleton, and he gave a sigh which I took to indicate his relief. "What do you think about it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

My friend bowed his compliments. "You are quick at identification," said he.

"We have been expecting you in these parts since Dr. Watson came down. You are in time to see a tragedy."

"Yes, indeed. I have no doubt that my friend's explanation will cover the facts. I will take an unpleasant remembrance back to London with me tomorrow."

"Oh, you return tomorrow?"

"That is my intention."

"I hope your visit has cast some light upon those occurrences which have puzzled us?"

Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"One cannot always have the success for which one hopes. An investigator needs facts and not legends or rumours. It has not been a satisfactory case."

My friend spoke in his frankest and most unconcerned manner. Stapleton still looked hard at him. Then he turned to me.

"I would suggest carrying this poor fellow to my house, but it would give my sister such a fright that I do not feel justified in doing it. I think that if we put something over his face he will be safe until morning."

And so it was arranged. Resisting Stapleton's offer of hospitality, Holmes and I set off to Baskerville Hall, leaving the naturalist to return alone. Looking back we saw the figure moving slowly away over the broad moor, and behind him that one black smudge²⁶ on the silvered slope which showed where the man was lying who had come so horribly to his end.

26. a dirty mark or smear; blot

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Stapleton declare himself to be a bachelor in spite of his being married?
 2. Why was Laura Lyons closely related to Mr. Stapleton?
 3. What made Watson and Holmes take the body of the man, lying prostrate downward with his face and broken neck on the rock, for the body of Sir Henry?
 4. What helped Holmes and Watson in finding out that the body was not of Sir Henry but that of Selden, the criminal?
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UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

Watson reacted to Holmes' sudden appearance by feeling that his sense of responsibility had been lifted off from his shoulders. Holmes said he knew it was Watson in his hut because he recognized his cigarette ashes when he was walking outside.

Watson felt slighted. Definitely, Holmes trusted him to handle the situation in Baskerville Hall. Perhaps all his hard works and reports to Holmes were nothing but a waste. Holmes replied that he had read over Watson's reports many times and that Watson had been invaluable to him. He had to go into hiding to close in on the murderer.

The two friends then talked about Watson's meeting with Laura Lyons. Holmes said that Lyons and Stapleton had been very close and intimate. In fact, Lyons believed that Stapleton will marry her. But this was not possible because Stapleton was actually married to the woman who had always been posing as his sister...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. The man who has returned to the hut is none other than Holmes, who knew that Watson had discovered his hide away.
2. The detective had been using Cartwright to get additional information and supplies.
3. After Watson relays his conversation with Mrs. Lyons, Holmes explains the relationship further.
4. Stapleton is actually married to the woman he has been showing as his sister.
5. By keeping this secret, he used her to attract Sir Henry and himself to develop a relationship with Mr. Lyons.
6. With her divorce in mind, Mrs. Lyons had planned on remarrying to Stapleton and was always ready to do what he said.
7. It was his current wife who sent the note warning Sir Henry while her husband was following the newly arrived heir.
8. Holmes could find out all this when Stapleton let it slip that he used to be a schoolmaster.
9. As Watson is about to return to the Hall, the air is filled up with a horrible scream. Another sound of the pursuing hound can be made out as well with a loud thud, all is quiet again.
10. Watson and Holmes do not stop running fast, fearing that they are late.
11. They do discover a twisted body on the rocks, the man is clothed in the same tweed suit that Sir Henry had been wearing the first day they had met him.
12. They vow revenge on the cruel Stapleton.

13. The regret is suddenly over as Holmes realizes that the dead man before them has a beard and is in fact Selden.
14. Barrymore had passed on a few of Henry's old clothes to help Selden escape and the hound had been chasing the scent that matched the old stolen boot.
15. Stapleton appear when they are about to carry the body into one of the abandoned houses.
16. They claim not to have heard the hound and attribute Selden's death to insanity because of the pressure of the remaining hidden.
17. Holmes pretend that he will be going to London the next day.
18. Holmes goes with Watson back to the Hall.

EXERCISE

1. What was the reason of confusion in the minds of both Watson and Holmes regarding the identity of the dead person on the moor?
2. Which incident did Watson remember soon after seeing the body of that person and how he related it up with the murder of that man?
3. What made Stapleton hurry past Watson and stop near the dead man? What was his reaction at the sight of the dead man?
4. What kind of explanation was given to Watson and Holmes by Stapleton for his presence at that hour of the night on the moor?
5. Why was he concerned, on being asked, regarding the safety of Sir Henry in particular? What explanation did Stapleton offer to Watson?

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the chapter events draw character-sketches of the following persons, underlining their new traits of head and heart seen in this chapter:

1. Sherlock Holmes
2. Watson
3. Stapleton
4. Mrs. Barrymore

Chapter 13

Fixing the Nets

"We're at close grips at last," said Holmes as we walked together across the moor. "What a nerve the fellow has! How he pulled himself together in the face of what must have been a paralyzing shock when he found that the wrong man had fallen a victim to his plot. I told you in London, Watson, and I tell you now again, that we have never had a foeman more worthy of our steel."

"I am sorry that he has seen you."

"And so was I at first. But there was no getting out of it."

"What effect do you think it will have upon his plans now that he knows you are here?"

"It may cause him to be more cautious, or it may drive him to desperate measures at once. Like most clever criminals, he may be too confident in his own cleverness and imagine that he has completely deceived us."

"Why should we not arrest him at once?"

"My dear Watson, you were born to be a man of action. Your instinct is always to do something energetic. But supposing, for argument's sake, that we had him arrested tonight, what on earth the better off should we be for that? We could prove nothing against him. There's the devilish cunning of it! If he

were acting through a human agent we could get some evidence, but if we were to drag this great dog to the light of day it would not help us in putting a rope round the neck of its master."

"Surely we have a case."

"Not a shadow of one — only surmise and conjecture. We should be laughed out of court if we came with such a story and such evidence."

"There is Sir Charles's death."

"Found dead without a mark upon him. You and I know that he died of sheer fright, and we know also what frightened him but how are we to get twelve stolid jurymen to know it? What signs are there of a hound? Where are the marks of its fangs? Of course we know that a hound does not bite a dead body and that Sir Charles was dead before ever the brute overtook him. But we have to prove all this, and we are not in a position to do it."

"Well, then, to-night?"

"We are not much better off to-night. Again, there was no direct connection between the hound and the man's death. We never saw the hound. We heard it, but we could not prove that it was running upon this man's trail. There is a complete absence of motive. No, my dear fellow; we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that we have no case at present, and that it is worth our while to run any risk in order to establish one."

"And how do you propose to do so?"

"I have great hopes of what Mrs. Laura Lyons may do for us when the position of affairs is made clear to her. And I have my own plan as well. Sufficient for to-morrow is the evil thereof; but I hope before the day is past to have the upper hand at last."

I could draw nothing further from him, and he walked, lost in thought, as far as the Baskerville gates.

"Are you coming up?"

"Yes; I see no reason for further concealment. But one last word, Watson. Say nothing of the hound to Sir Henry. Let him think that Selden's death was as Stapleton would have us believe. He will have a better nerve for the ordeal which he will have to undergo to-morrow, when he is engaged, if I remember your report aright, to dine with these people."

"And so am I."

"Then you must excuse yourself and he must go alone. That will be easily arranged. And now, if we are too late for dinner, I think that we are both ready for our suppers."

Sir Henry was more pleased than surprised to see Sherlock Holmes, for he had for some days been expecting that recent events would bring him down from London. He did raise his eyebrows, however, when he found that my friend had neither any luggage nor any explanations for its absence. Between us we soon supplied his wants, and then over a belated supper we explained to the baronet as much of our experience as it seemed desirable that he should know. But first I had the unpleasant duty of breaking the news to Barrymore and his wife. To him it may have been an **unmitigated**¹ relief, but she wept bitterly in her apron. To all the world he was the man of violence, half animal and half demon; but to her he always remained the little wilful boy of her own girlhood, the child who had clung to her

¹. not lessened

hand. Evil indeed is the man who has not one woman to mourn him.

"I've been **moping**² in the house, all day since Watson went off in the morning," said the baronet. "I guess I should have some credit, for I have kept my promise. If I hadn't sworn not to go about alone I might have had a more lively evening, for I had a message from Stapleton asking me over there."

"I have no doubt that you would have had a more lively evening," said Holmes drily. "By the way, I don't suppose you appreciate that we have been mourning over you as having broken your neck?"

Sir Henry opened his eyes. "How was that?"

"This poor wretch was dressed in your clothes. I fear your servant who gave them to him may get into trouble with the police."

"That is unlikely. There was no mark on any of them, as far as I know."

"That's lucky for him — in fact, it's lucky for all of you, since you are all on the wrong side of the law in this matter. I am not sure that as a conscientious detective my first duty is not to arrest the whole household. Watson's reports are most **incriminating**³ documents."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Who is an evil man, in real sense, according to Watson?
2. What makes Holmes reject Watson's proposal for the arrest of Stapleton, notwithstanding, they have a case against him?
3. What makes Sherlock Holmes ask Watson not to say a single word about the hound to Sir Henry, while conveying him about Selden's death?

2. sitting idly; sulking, 3. implicating; cause to be or appear to be guilty

4. What made Sir Henry feel happier than surprised to Sherlock Holmes?
 5. What made Sir Henry surprise regarding Holmes?
 6. Why was Sir Henry not anxious regarding the fact to the man who passed away was putting on his clothes that he had given to Barrymore?
-

"But how about the case?" asked the baronet. "Have you made anything out of the tangle? I don't know that Watson and I are much the wiser since we came down."

"I think that I shall be in a position to make the situation rather more clear to you before long. It has been an exceedingly difficult and most complicated business. There are several points upon which we still want light — but it is coming all the same."

"We've had one experience, as Watson has no doubt told you. We heard the hound on the moor, so I can swear that it is not all empty superstition. I had something to do with dogs when I was out West, and I know one when I hear one. If you can muzzle⁴ that one and put him on a chain I'll be ready to swear you are the greatest detective of all time."

"I think I will muzzle him and chain him all right if you will give me your help."

"Whatever you tell me to do I will do."

"Very good; and I will ask you also to do it blindly, without always asking the reason."

"Just as you like."

"If you will do this I think the chances are that our little problem will soon be solved. I have no doubt—"

He stopped suddenly and stared fixedly up over my head into the air. The lamp beat upon his face, and so intent was it and so still that it might have been that

4. gag; cover the mouth with a strap or wire

of a clear-cut classical statue, a **personification**⁵ of alertness and expectation.

"What is it?" we both cried.

I could see as he looked down that he was repressing some internal emotion. His features were still composed, but his eyes shone with amused **exultation**⁶.

"Excuse the admiration of a **connoisseur**⁷," said he as he waved his hand towards the line of portraits which covered the opposite wall. "Watson won't allow that I know anything of art but that is mere jealousy because our views upon the subject differ. Now, these are a really very fine series of portraits."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so," said Sir Henry, glancing with some surprise at my friend. "I don't pretend to know much about these things, and I'd be a better judge of a horse or a steer than of a picture. I didn't know that you found time for such things."

"I know what is good when I see it, and I see it now. That's a Kneller, I'll swear, that lady in the blue silk over yonder, and the stout gentleman with the wig ought to be a Reynolds. They are all family portraits, I presume?"

"Every one."

"Do you know the names?"

"Barrymore has been coaching me in them, and I think I can say my lessons fairly well."

"Who is the gentleman with the telescope?"

"That is Rear-Admiral Baskerville, who served under Rodney in the West Indies. The man with the blue coat and the roll of paper is Sir William

5. the person or thing embodying a quality, 6. delight; triumph 7. an expert in the fine arts,

Baskerville, who was Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons under Pitt."

"And this Cavalier⁸ opposite to me — the one with the black velvet and the lace?"

"Ah, you have a right to know about him. That is the cause of all the mischief, the wicked Hugo, who started the Hound of the Baskervilles. We're not likely to forget him."

I gazed with interest and some surprise upon the portrait.

"Dear me!" said Holmes, "he seems a quiet, meek-mannered man enough, but I dare say that there was a lurking⁹ devil in his eyes. I had pictured him as a more robust and ruffiantly¹⁰ person."

"There's no doubt about the authenticity, for the name and the date, 1647, are on the back of the canvas."

Holmes said little more, but the picture of the old roysterer seemed to have a fascination for him, and his eyes were continually fixed upon it during supper. It was not until later, when Sir Henry had gone to his room, that I was able to follow the trend of his thoughts. He led me back into the banqueting-hall, his bedroom candle in his hand, and he held it up against the time-stained portrait on the wall.

"Do you see anything there?"

I looked at the broad plumed hat, the curling love-locks, the white lace collar, and the straight, severe face which was framed between them. It was not a brutal countenance, but it was prim¹¹ hard, and stern, with a firm-set, thin-lipped mouth, and a coldly intolerant eye.

8. horseman; a courtly gentleman, 9. hidden, 10. tough; lawless, 11. nice

"Is it like anyone you know?"

"There is something of Sir Henry about the jaw."

"Just a suggestion, perhaps. But wait an instant!"

He stood upon a chair, and, holding up the light in his left hand, he curved his right arm over the broad hat and round the long ringlets.

"Good heavens!" I cried in amazement.

The face of Stapleton had sprung out of the canvas.

"Ha, you see it now. My eyes have been trained to examine faces and not their trimmings. It is the first quality of a criminal investigator that he should see through a disguise."

"But this is marvellous. It might be his portrait."

"Yes, it is an interesting instance of a throwback, which appears to be both physical and spiritual. A study of family portraits is enough to convert a man to the doctrine of reincarnation. The fellow is a Baskerville — that is evident."

"With designs upon the succession."

"Exactly. This chance of the picture has supplied us with one of our most obvious missing links. We have him, Watson, we have him, and I dare swear that before tomorrow night he will be fluttering in our net as helpless as one of his own butterflies. A pin, a cork, and a card, and we add him to the Baker Street collection!" He burst into one of his rare fits of laughter as he turned away from the picture. I have not heard him laugh often, and it has always boded¹² ill to somebody.

I was up betimes¹³ in the morning, but Holmes was afoot earlier still, for I saw him as I dressed, coming up the drive.

12. announced; predicted, 13. early

"Yes, we should have a full day today," he remarked, and he rubbed his hands with the joy of action. "The nets are all in place, and the drag is about to begin. We'll know before the day is out whether we have caught our big, leanjawed pike¹⁴, or whether he has got through the meshes¹⁵."

"Have you been on the moor already?"

"I have sent a report from Grimpen to Princetown as to the death of Selden. I think I can promise that none of you will be troubled in the matter. And I have also communicated with my faithful Cartwright, who would certainly have pined away at the door of my hut, as a dog does at his master's grave, if I had not set his mind at rest about my safety."

"What is the next move?"

"To see Sir Henry. Ah, here he is!"

"Good-morning, Holmes," said the baronet. "You look like a general who is planning a battle with his chief of the staff."

"That is the exact situation. Watson was asking for orders."

"And so do I."

"Very good. You are engaged, as I understand, to dine with our friends the Stapletons tonight."

"I hope that you will come also. They are very hospitable people, and I am sure that they would be very glad to see you."

"I fear that Watson and I must go to London."

"To London?"

"Yes, I think that we should be more useful there at the present juncture."

The baronet's face perceptibly lengthened.

14. fish (victim), 15. net

"I hoped that you were going to see me through this business. The Hall and the moor are not very pleasant places when one is alone."

"My dear fellow, you must trust me **implicitly**¹⁶ and do exactly what I tell you. You can tell your friends that we should have been happy to have come with you, but that urgent business required us to be in town. We hope very soon to return to Devonshire. Will you remember to give them that message?"

"If you insist upon it."

"There is no alternative, I assure you."

I saw by the baronet's clouded brow that he was deeply hurt by what he regarded as our desertion.

"When do you desire to go?" he asked coldly.

"Immediately after breakfast. We will drive in to Coombe Tracey, but Watson will leave his things as a pledge that he will come back to you. Watson, you will send a note to Stapleton to tell him that you regret that you cannot come."

"I have a good mind to go to London with you," said the baronet. "Why should I stay here alone?"

"Because it is your post of duty. Because you gave me your word that you would do as you were told, and I tell you to stay."

"All right, then, I'll stay."

"One more direction! I wish you to drive to Merripit House. Send back your trap, however, and let them know that you intend to walk home."

"To walk across the moor?"

"Yes."

"But that is the very thing which you have so often cautioned me not to do."

"This time you may do it with safety. If I had not

¹⁶ unquestioningly; absolutely

every confidence in your nerve and courage I would not suggest it, but it is essential that you should do it."

"Then I will do it."

"And as you value your life do not go across the moor in any direction save along the straight path which leads from Merripit House to the Grimpen Road, and is your natural way home."

"I will do just what you say."

"Very good. I should be glad to get away as soon after breakfast as possible, so as to reach London in the afternoon."

I was much astounded by this programme, though I remembered that Holmes had said to Stapleton on the night before that his visit would terminate next day. It had not crossed my mind however, that he would wish me to go with him, nor could I understand how we could both be absent at a moment which he himself declared to be critical. There was nothing for it, however, but *implicit*¹⁷ obedience; so we bade good-bye to our *rueful*¹⁸ friend, and a couple of hours afterwards we were at the station of Coombe Tracey and had dispatched the trap upon its return journey. A small boy was waiting upon the platform.

"Any orders, sir?"

"You will take this train to town, Cartwright. The moment you arrive you will send a wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, in my name, to say that if he finds the pocketbook which I have dropped he is to send it by registered post to Baker Street."

"Yes, sir."

"And ask at the station office if there is a message for me."

17. unquestioning, 18. repentant; sorrowful

The boy returned with a telegram, which Holmes handed to me. It ran:

Wire received. Coming down with unsigned warrant. Arrive five-forty. Lestrade.

"That is in answer to mine of this morning. He is the best of the professionals, I think, and we may need his assistance. Now, Watson, I think that we cannot employ our time better than by calling upon your acquaintance, Mrs. Laura Lyons."

His plan of campaign was beginning to be evident. He would use the baronet in order to convince the Stapletons that we were really gone, while we should actually return at the instant when we were likely to be needed. That telegram from London, if mentioned by Sir Henry to the Stapletons, must remove the last suspicions from their minds. Already I seemed to see our nets drawing closer around that leanjawed pike.

Mrs. Laura Lyons was in her office, and Sherlock Holmes opened his interview with a frankness and directness which considerably amazed her.

"I am investigating the circumstances which attended the death of the late Sir Charles Baskerville," said he. "My friend here, Dr. Watson, has informed me of what you have communicated, and also of what you have withheld in connection with that matter."

"What have I withheld?" she asked defiantly.

"You have **confessed**¹⁹ that you asked Sir Charles to be at the gate at ten o'clock. We know that that was the place and hour of his death. You have withheld what the connection is between these events."

"There is no connection."

"In that case the coincidence must indeed be an

19. acknowledged

extraordinary one. But I think that we shall succeed in establishing a connection, after all. I wish to be perfectly frank with you, Mrs. Lyons. We regard this case as one of murder, and the evidence may implicate²⁰ not only your friend Mr. Stapleton but his wife as well."

The lady sprang from her chair.

"His wife!" she cried.

"The fact is no longer a secret. The person who has passed for his sister is really his wife."

Mrs. Lyons had resumed her seat. Her hands were grasping the arms of her chair, and I saw that the pink nails had turned white with the pressure of her grip.

"His wife!" she said again. "His wife! He is not a married man."

Sherlock Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"Prove it to me! Prove it to me! And if you can do so —!"

The fierce flash of her eyes said more than any words.

"I have come prepared to do so," said Holmes, drawing several papers from his pocket. "Here is a photograph of the couple taken in York four years ago. It is indorsed²¹ 'Mr. and Mrs. Vandeleur,' but you will have no difficulty in recognizing him, and her also, if you know her by sight. Here are three written descriptions by trustworthy witnesses of Mr. and Mrs. Vandeleur, who at that time kept St. Oliver's private school. Read them and see if you can doubt the identity of these people."

She glanced at them, and then looked up at us with the set rigid face of a desperate woman.

"Mr. Holmes," she said, "this man had offered me marriage on condition that I could get a divorce from

20. showed to be involved; charge, 21. confirmed

my husband. He has lied to me, the villain, in every conceivable way. Not one word of truth has he ever told me. And why — why? I imagined that all was for my own sake. But now I see that I was never anything but a tool in his hands. Why should I preserve faith with him who never kept any with me? Why should I try to shield him from the consequences of his own wicked acts? Ask me what you like, and there is nothing which I shall hold back. One thing I swear to you, and that is that when I wrote the letter I never dreamed of any harm to the old gentleman, who had been my kindest friend."

"I entirely believe you, madam," said Sherlock Holmes. "The recital of these events must be very painful to you, and perhaps it will make it easier if I tell you what occurred, and you can check me if I make any material mistake. The sending of this letter was suggested to you by Stapleton?"

"He dictated it."

"I presume that the reason he gave was that you would receive help from Sir Charles for the legal expenses connected with your divorce?"

"Exactly."

"And then after you had sent the letter he dissuaded²² you from keeping the appointment?"

"He told me that it would hurt his self-respect that any other man should find the money for such an object, and that though he was a poor man himself he would devote his last penny to removing the obstacles which divided us."

"He appears to be a very consistent character. And then you heard nothing until you read the reports of the death in the paper?"

"No."

"And he made you swear to say nothing about your appointment with Sir Charles?"

"He did. He said that the death was a very mysterious one, and that I should certainly be suspected if the facts came out. He frightened me into remaining silent."

"Quite so. But you had your suspicions?"

She hesitated and looked down.

"I knew him," she said. "But if he had kept faith with me I should always have done so with him."

"I think that on the whole you have had a fortunate escape," said Sherlock Holmes. "You have had him in your power and he knew it, and yet you are alive. You have been walking for some months very near to the edge of a precipice²³. We must wish you good-morning now, Mrs. Lyons, and it is probable that you will very shortly hear from us again."

"Our case becomes rounded off, and difficulty after difficulty thins away in front of us," said Holmes as we stood waiting for the arrival of the express from town. "I shall soon be in the position of being able to put into a single connected narrative one of the most singular and sensational crimes of modern times. Students of criminology will remember the analogous incidents in Godno, in Little Russia, in the year '66, and of course there are the Anderson murders in North Carolina, but this case possesses some features which are entirely its own. Even now we have no clear case against this very wily man. But I shall be very much surprised if it is not clear enough before we go to bed this night."

23. steep cliff,

The London express came roaring into the station, and a small, wiry bulldog of a man had sprung from a first-class carriage. We all three shook hands, and I saw at once from the reverential²⁴ way in which Lestrade gazed at my companion that he had learned a good deal since the days when they had first worked together. I could well remember the scorn²⁵ which the theories of the reasoner used then to excite in the practical man.

"Anything good?" he asked.

"The biggest thing for years," said Holmes. "We have two hours before we need think of starting. I think we might employ it in getting some dinner and then, Lestrade, we will take the London fog out of your throat by giving you a breath of the pure night air of Dartmoor. Never been there? Ah, well, I don't suppose you will forget your first visit."

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What was Holmes' promise to Sir Henry regarding the case when asked by him?
 2. What did Holmes ask Sir Henry to do, to make him able in a bid to betray the secret with respect to hound?
 3. On which ground did Holmes swear that he would be able to net in the criminal before the next day?
 4. What made Holmes refuse to join the supper that had been arranged by Stapletons to honour Sir Henry?
 5. What made Holmes tell Sir Henry that he and his friend Watson had to go to London soon in connection with some very urgent work?
-

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

Dr. Watson along with Sherlock Holmes returned to Baskervilles Hall. Holmes remarked that Stapleton was a very cruel and cunning man since he was able to keep his composure even after learning that his murderous plan had failed. Watson wanted Stapleton to be arrested, but as per Holmes there was not enough evidence. They had only heard the sound of a hound; they had not actually seen a hound kill Selden. There wasn't any direct connection between the hound and the deaths of Selden and Sir Charles. Selden had died in a fall. Sir Charles had died of fright. There was no motive.

Back at Baskerville Hall, Mrs. Barrymore was in deep mourning for her brother Selden. Sherlock Holmes told Sir Henry that Selden was wearing his clothes when he died. The implication was quite clear. After dinner, Sherlock Holmes tried to peer over a collection of family oilpaintings of Sir Henry's ancestors...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. There is still no case against Stapleton.
2. Holmes has a plan and is still confident that Mrs. Lyons holds further useful information.
3. Holmes asks Watson not to disclose to Sir Henry about the hound since he wants the baronet to keep the dinner with the Stapletons.
4. Watson wants to aid in deception that they are returning to London on be available for the execution of the rest of the plan.
5. Mrs. Barrymore is upset over the death of Selden, but Mr. Barrymore is quite relieved.
6. Sir Henry is glad to see Holmes and agrees to do as he says without question.

7. Sir Henry declined the invitation from Stapleton and remained at home instead, a decision that saved his life.
8. At supper, Sir Henry's attention is caught by a line of family portraits, particularly Hugo Baskerville's from 1647.
9. Later, the same night, the detective uses his arm to cover the hat and hair, and Watson sees that there is a great resemblance to Stapleton.
10. Early next morning, the detective informs the authorities of Selden's death.
11. Seeing Sir Henry, Holmes tells him that he and Watson will be returning to London and to be sure to convey the message to Stapleton.
12. Holmes instruct Sir Henry to walk home on the straight path on the moor after dinner that night.
13. At the railway station to see Cartwright off to London, Holmes gets a telegram from Lestrade, saying that he will be coming down at 5.40 (as requested). They pay a visit to Mrs. Lyons.
14. Holmes tells her that Stapleton is actually a married man named Vandeleur, and she is ready to admit to the next events.
15. Stapleton had dictated her the letter to Sir Charles under the pretend of getting money for her divorce.
16. Then apparently he changed his mind. Insisting that he would find some way to pay for it himself and dissuaded her from keeping the appointment.
17. At the news of the death of Sir Charles, Stapleton asked her to be quite about her feelings for him for fear of suspicious circumstances.
18. Mrs. Lyons had not intentions of harming Sir Charles.

19. Holmes and Watson leave Mrs. Lyons after her confession and meet Lestrade at the station.
20. All have dinner together.

EXERCISE

1. Describe briefly about the missing connections between the hound and the man's death?
2. What made Holmes interested in letting Stapleton's know that both Holmes and Watson had left for London on an urgent mission?
3. What sort of compromise was made between Sir Henry and Holmes, on the expression of a feeling of desertion by Sir Henry at the sudden declaration of Holmes and Watson going to London on an urgent mission?
4. Which strategy did Sherlock Holmes adopt to trap the suspect?
5. How did Holmes make Laura Lyons reveal the essential secrecy linked with the death of Sir Charles?
6. Mention the important points which were very important in the case of Sir Charles' death and the hound but lacked enough evidences in a bid to make foolproof case against the suspect.

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the chapter incidents write down the character-sketches of the following persons, underlining their new traits of head and heart discovered in this chapter.

1. Mr. Sherlock Holmes
2. Sir Henry
3. Mrs. Laura Lyons
4. Mr. Cartwright
5. Mr. Stapleton

Chapter 14

The Hound of the Baskervilles

One of Sherlock Holmes' defects — if, indeed, one may call it a defect — was that he was exceedingly loath¹ to communicate his full plans to any other person until the instant of their fulfilment. Partly it came no doubt from his own masterful nature, which loved to dominate and surprise those who were around him. Partly also from his professional caution, which urged him never to take any chances. The result, however, was very trying for those who were acting as his agents and assistants. I had often suffered under it, but never more so than during that long drive in the darkness. The great ordeal was in front of us; at last we were about to make our final effort, and yet Holmes had said nothing, and I could only surmise what his course of action would be. My nerves thrilled with anticipation when at last the cold wind upon our faces and the dark, void spaces on either side of the narrow road told me that we were back upon the moor once again. Every stride of the horses and every turn of the wheels was taking us nearer to our supreme adventure.

Our conversation was hampered by the presence of the driver of the hired wagonette, so that we were forced to talk of trivial matters when our nerves

1. unwilling

were tense with emotion and anticipation. It was a relief to me, after that unnatural restraint, when we at last passed Frankland's house and knew that we were drawing near to the Hall and to the scene of action. We did not drive up to the door but got down near the gate of the avenue². The wagonette was paid off and ordered to return to Coombe Tracey forthwith, while we started to walk to Merripit House.

"Are you armed, Lestrade?"

The little detective smiled. "As long as I have my trousers I have a hip-pocket, and as long as I have my hip-pocket I have something in it."

"Good! My friend and I are also ready for emergencies."

"You're mighty close about this affair, Mr. Holmes. What's the game now?"

"A waiting game."

"My word, it does not seem a very cheerful place," said the detective with a shiver, glancing round him at the gloomy slopes of the hill and at the huge lake of fog which lay over the Grimpen Mire. "I see the lights of a house ahead of us."

"That is Merripit House and the end of our journey. I must request you to walk on tiptoe and not to talk above a whisper."

We moved cautiously along the track as if we were bound for the house, but Holmes halted us when we were about two hundred yards from it.

"This will do," said he. "These rocks upon the right make an admirable screen."

"We are to wait here?"

2. incident place

"Yes, we shall make our little ambush here. Get into this hollow, Lestrade. You have been inside the house, have you not, Watson? Can you tell the position of the rooms? What are those latticed³ windows at this end?"

"I think they are the kitchen windows."

"And the one beyond, which shines so brightly?"

"That is certainly the dining-room."

"The blinds are up. You know the lie of the land best. Creep forward quietly and see what they are doing — but for heaven's sake don't let them know that they are watched!"

I tiptoed down the path and **stooped**⁴ behind the low wall which surrounded the stunted orchard. Creeping in its shadow I reached a point whence I could look straight through the uncurtained window.

There were only two men in the room, Sir Henry and Stapleton. They sat with their profiles towards me on either side of the round table. Both of them were smoking cigars, and coffee and wine were in front of them. Stapleton was talking with **animation**⁵, but the baronet looked pale and **distract**⁶. Perhaps the thought of that lonely walk across the ill-omened moor was weighing heavily upon his mind.

As I watched them Stapleton rose and left the room, while Sir Henry filled his glass again and leaned back in his chair, puffing at his cigar. I heard the creak of a door and the crisp sound of boots upon gravel. The steps passed along the path on the other side of the wall under which I **crouched**⁷. Looking over, I saw the naturalist pause at the door of an

3. grill or grid, 4. bent down, 5. excitement; liveliness, 6. absent-minded; distracted, 7. stooped; cringed

out-house in the corner of the orchard. A key turned in a lock, and as he passed in there was a curious **scuffling**⁸ noise from within. He was only a minute or so inside, and then I heard the key turn once more and he passed me and reentered the house. I saw him rejoin his guest, and I crept quietly back to where my companions were waiting to tell them what I had seen.

"You say, Watson, that the lady is not there?" Holmes asked when I had finished my report.

"No."

"Where can she be, then, since there is no light in any other room except the kitchen?"

"I cannot think where she is."

I have said that over the great Grimpen Mire there hung a dense, white fog. It was drifting slowly in our direction and banked itself up like a wall on that side of us, low but thick and well defined. The moon shone on it, and it looked like a great shimmering ice-field, with the heads of the distant tors as rocks borne upon its surface. Holmes' face was turned towards it, and he muttered impatiently as he watched its **sluggish**⁹ drift.

"It's moving towards us, Watson."

"Is that serious?"

"Very serious, indeed — the one thing upon earth which could have disarranged my plans. He can't be very long, now. It is already ten o'clock. Our success and even his life may depend upon his coming out before the fog is over the path."

The night was clear and fine above us. The stars shone cold and bright, while a half-moon bathed the

8. shuffling, 9. lazy; slow

whole scene in a soft, uncertain light. Before us lay the dark bulk of the house, its **serrated**¹⁰ roof and bristling chimneys hard outlined against the silver-spangled sky. Broad bars of golden light from the lower windows stretched across the orchard and the moor. One of them was suddenly shut off. The servants had left the kitchen. There only remained the lamp in the dining-room where the two men, the murderous host and the unconscious guest, still chatted over their cigars.

Every minute that white woolly plain which covered one-half of the moor was drifting closer and closer to the house. Already the first thin wisps of it were curling across the golden square of the lighted window. The farther wall of the orchard was already invisible, and the trees were standing out of a swirl of white vapour. As we watched it the fog-wreaths came crawling round both corners of the house and rolled slowly into one dense bank on which the upper floor and the roof floated like a strange ship upon a shadowy sea. Holmes struck his hand passionately upon the rock in front of us and stamped his feet in his impatience.

"If he isn't out in a quarter of an hour the path will be covered. In half an hour we won't be able to see our hands in front of us."

"Shall we move farther back upon higher ground?"

"Yes, I think it would be as well."

So as the fog-bank flowed onward we fell back before it until we were half a mile from the house, and still that dense white sea, with the moon silvering its upper edge, swept slowly and **inexorably**¹¹ on.

10. ragged; saw toothed, 11. mercilessly

"We are going too far," said Holmes. "We dare not take the chance of his being overtaken before he can reach us. At all costs we must hold our ground where we are." He dropped on his knees and clapped his ear to the ground. "Thank God, I think that I hear him coming."

A sound of quick steps broke the silence of the moor. Crouching among the stones we stared intently at the silver-tipped bank in front of us. The steps grew louder, and through the fog, as through a curtain, there stepped the man whom we were awaiting. He looked round him in surprise as he emerged into the clear, starlit night. Then he came swiftly along the path, passed close to where we lay, and went on up the long slope behind us. As he walked he glanced continually over either shoulder, like a man who is ill at ease.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. Why was Sherlock Holmes' nature to keep every card to his chest till the correct moment come, made his agents and assistants very tense and challenged always?
2. What made Holmes and his assistants decide to get down before the Merripit House rather than getting down at the door of the House itself?
3. What made Holmes ask his colleague detective, Lestrade to walk on tiptoe and not to talk above whisper while moving towards the Merripit House?
4. What do you think that where Mr. Stapleton should have gone leaving his important guest, Sir Henry behind all in the room alone?
5. What do you think that where Mrs. Stapleton was hiding herself, on the other hand, she being hostess, must have been present in the room where Sir Henry was being served with alcohol?

6. What was going fast towards Holmes and his team members?
 7. What made Holmes so anxious regarding fast approaching of the dense fog?
-

"Hist!" cried Holmes, and I heard the sharp click of a cocking pistol. "Look out! It's coming!"

There was a thin, crisp, continuous patter from somewhere in the heart of that crawling bank. The cloud was within fifty yards of where we lay, and we glared at it, all three, uncertain what horror was about to break from the heart of it. I was at Holmes' elbow, and I glanced for an instant at his face. It was pale and exultant, his eyes shining brightly in the moonlight. But suddenly they started forward in a rigid, fixed stare, and his lips parted in amazement. At the same instant Lestrade gave a yell of terror and threw himself face downward upon the ground. I sprang to my feet, my inert hand grasping my pistol, my mind paralyzed by the dreadful shape which had sprung out upon us from the shadows of the fog. A hound it was, an enormous¹² coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering¹³ glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering¹⁴ flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.

With long bounds the huge black creature was leaping down the track, following hard upon the

12. huge, 13. burning without flame, 14. waving

footsteps of our friend. So paralyzed were we by the **apparition**¹⁵ that we allowed him to pass before we had recovered our nerve. Then Holmes and I both fired together, and the creature gave a hideous howl, which showed that one at least had hit him. He did not pause, however, but bounded onward. Far away on the path we saw Sir Henry looking back, his face white in the moonlight, his hands raised in horror, glaring helplessly at the frightful thing which was hunting him down.

But that cry of pain from the hound had blown all our fears to the winds. If he was vulnerable he was mortal, and if we could wound him we could kill him. Never have I seen a man run as Holmes ran that night. I am reckoned fleet of foot, but he outpaced me as much as I outpaced the little professional. In front of us as we flew up the track we heard scream after scream from Sir Henry and the deep roar of the hound. I was in time to see the beast spring upon its victim, hurl him to the ground, and worry at his throat. But the next instant Holmes had emptied five barrels of his revolver into the creature's flank. With a last howl of agony and a vicious snap in the air, it rolled upon its back, four feet pawing furiously, and then fell limp upon its side. I stooped, panting, and pressed my pistol to the dreadful, shimmering head, but it was useless to press the trigger. The giant hound was dead.

Sir Henry lay insensible where he had fallen. We tore away his collar, and Holmes breathed a prayer of gratitude when we saw that there was no sign of a wound and that the rescue had been in time. Already

15. phantom; ghost

our friend's eyelids shivered and he made a feeble effort to move. Lestrade thrust his brandy-flask between the baronet's teeth, and two frightened eyes were looking up at us.

"My God!" he whispered. "What was it? What, in heaven's name, was it?"

"It's dead, whatever it is," said Holmes. "We've laid the family ghost once and forever."

In mere size and strength it was a terrible creature which was lying stretched before us. It was not a pure bloodhound and it was not a pure mastiff; but it appeared to be a combination of the two — **gaunt**¹⁶, savage, and as large as a small lioness. Even now in the stillness of death, the huge jaws seemed to be dripping with a bluish flame and the small, deep-set, cruel eyes were ringed with fire. I placed my hand upon the glowing muzzle, and as I held them up my own fingers smouldered and gleamed in the darkness.

"Phosphorus," I said.

"A cunning preparation of it," said Holmes, sniffing at the dead animal. "There is no smell which might have interfered with his power of scent. We owe you a deep apology, Sir Henry, for having exposed you to this fright. I was prepared for a hound, but not for such a creature as this. And the fog gave us little time to receive him."

"You have saved my life."

"Having first endangered it. Are you strong enough to stand?"

"Give me another mouthful of that brandy and I shall be ready for anything. So! Now, if you will help me up. What do you propose to do?"

16. extremely thin and bony

"To leave you here. You are not fit for further adventures tonight. If you will wait, one or other of us will go back with you to the Hall."

He tried to stagger¹⁷ to his feet; but he was still ghastly pale and trembling in every limb. We helped him to a rock, where he sat shivering with his face buried in his hands.

"We must leave you now," said Holmes. "The rest of our work must be done, and every moment is of importance. We have our case, and now we only want our man."

"It's a thousand to one against our finding him at the house," he continued as we retraced our steps swiftly down the path. "Those shots must have told him that the game was up."

"We were some distance off, and this fog may have deadened them."

"He followed the hound to call him off — of that you may be certain. No, no, he's gone by this time! But we'll search the house and make sure."

The front door was open, so we rushed in and hurried from room to room to the amazement of a doddering¹⁸ old manservant, who met us in the passage. There was no light save in the dining-room, but Holmes caught up the lamp and left no corner of the house unexplored. No sign could we see of the man whom we were chasing. On the upper floor, however, one of the bedroom doors was locked.

"There's someone in here," cried Lestrade. "I can hear a movement. Open this door!"

A faint moaning and rustling came from within. Holmes struck the door just over the lock with the

17. stand unsteadily, 18. trembling as from old age; shaky

flat of his foot and it flew open. Pistol in hand, we all three rushed into the room.

But there was no sign within it of that desperate and defiant villain whom we expected to see. Instead we were faced by an object so strange and so unexpected that we stood for a moment staring at it in amazement.

The room had been fashioned into a small museum, and the walls were lined by a number of glass-topped cases full of that collection of butterflies and moths the formation of which had been the relaxation of this complex and dangerous man. In the centre of this room there was an upright beam, which had been placed at some period as a support for the old worm-eaten baulk of timber which spanned the roof. To this post a figure was tied, so swathed and muffled in the sheets which had been used to secure it that one could not for the moment tell whether it was that of a man or a woman. One towel passed round the throat and was secured at the back of the pillar. Another covered the lower part of the face, and over it two dark eyes — eyes full of grief and shame and a dreadful questioning — stared back at us. In a minute we had torn off the gag, unswathed¹⁹ the bonds, and Mrs. Stapleton sank upon the floor in front of us. As her beautiful head fell upon her chest I saw the clear red weal²⁰ of a whiplash across her neck.

"The brute!" cried Holmes. "Here, Lestrade, your brandy-bottle! Put her in the chair! She has fainted from ill-usage and exhaustion."

She opened her eyes again.

19. freed from; untied, 20. streak; mark of being beaten

"Is he safe?" she asked. "Has he escaped?"

"He cannot escape us, madam."

"No, no, I did not mean my husband. Sir Henry? Is he safe?"

"Yes."

"And the hound?"

"It is dead."

She gave a long sigh of satisfaction.

"Thank God! Thank God! Oh, this villain! See how he has treated me!" She shot her arms out from her sleeves, and we saw with horror that they were all **mottled**²¹ with **bruises**²². "But this is nothing — nothing! It is my mind and soul that he has tortured and **defiled**²³. I could endure it all, ill-usage, solitude, a life of deception, everything, as long as I could still cling to the hope that I had his love, but now I know that in this also I have been his dupe and his tool." She broke into passionate sobbing as she spoke.

"You bear him no good will, madam," said Holmes. "Tell us then where we shall find him. If you have ever aided him in evil, help us now and so atone²⁴."

"There is but one place where he can have fled," she answered. "There is an old tin mine on an island in the heart of the mire. It was there that he kept his hound and there also he had made preparations so that he might have a refuge. That is where he would fly."

The fog-bank lay like white wool against the window. Holmes held the lamp towards it.

"See," said he. "No one could find his way into the Grimpen Mire tonight."

She laughed and clapped her hands. Her eyes and teeth gleamed with fierce merriment.

21. spotted or blotched, 22. injuries, 23. made foul or unclean, 24. make amends; make up for

"He may find his way in, but never out," she cried. "How can he see the guiding wands²⁵ to night? We planted them together, he and I, to mark the pathway through the mire. Oh, if I could only have plucked them out today. Then indeed you would have had him at your mercy!"

It was evident to us that all pursuit was in vain until the fog had lifted. Meanwhile we left Lestrade in possession of the house while Holmes and I went back with the baronet to Baskerville Hall. The story of the Stapletons could no longer be withheld from him, but he took the blow bravely when he learned the truth about the woman whom he had loved. But the shock of the night's adventures had shattered his nerves, and before morning he lay **delirious**²⁶ in a high fever under the care of Dr. Mortimer. The two of them were destined to travel together round the world before Sir Henry had become once more the hale, hearty man that he had been before he became master of that ill-omened estate.

And now I come rapidly to the conclusion of this singular narrative, in which I have tried to make the reader share those dark fears and vague surmises²⁷ which clouded our lives so long and ended in so tragic a manner. On the morning after the death of the hound the fog had lifted and we were guided by Mrs. Stapleton to the point where they had found a pathway through the bog. It helped us to realize the horror of this woman's life when we saw the eagerness and joy with which she laid us on her husband's track. We left her standing upon the thin peninsula²⁸

25. rods; branches, 26. confused and restless, 27. guesses, 28. an area of land almost completely surrounded by water; except for one side

of firm, **peaty**²⁹ soil which tapered out into the widespread bog. From the end of it a small wand planted here and there showed where the path zigzagged from tuft to tuft of rushes among those green-scummed pits and foul **quagmires**³⁰ which barred the way to the stranger. Rank reeds and lush, slimy water-plants sent an odour of decay and a heavy **miasmatic**³¹ vapour onto our faces, while a false step plunged us more than once thigh-deep into the dark, quivering mire, which shook for yards in soft **undulations**³² around our feet. Its **tenacious**³³ grip plucked at our heels as we walked, and when we sank into it it was as if some malignant hand was tugging us down into those obscene depths, so grim and purposeful was the clutch in which it held us. Once only we saw a trace that someone had passed that **perilous**³⁴ way before us. From amid a tuft of cotton grass which bore it up out of the slime some dark thing was projecting. Holmes sank to his waist as he stepped from the path to seize it, and had we not been there to drag him out he could never have set his foot upon firm land again. He held an old black boot in the air.

"Meyers, Toronto," was printed on the leather inside.

"It is worth a mud bath," said he. "It is our friend Sir Henry's missing boot."

"Thrown there by Stapleton in his flight."

"Exactly. He retained it in his hand after using it to set the hound upon the track. He fled when he knew the game was up, still clutching it. And he

29. full of decayed vegetable matter, 30. bog; an area of wet, spongy ground, 31. poisonous or polluted, 32. rolling movement, 33. sticky; firm, 34. dangerous

hurled it away at this point of his flight. We know at least that he came so far in safety."

But more than that we were never destined to know, though there was much which we might surmise³⁵. There was no chance of finding footsteps in the mire, for the rising mud oozed swiftly in upon them, but as we at last reached firmer ground beyond the morass we all looked eagerly for them. But no slightest sign of them ever met our eyes. If the earth told a true story, then Stapleton never reached that island of refuge towards which he struggled through the fog upon that last night. Somewhere in the heart of the great Grimpen Mire, down in the foul slime of the huge morass which had sucked him in, this cold and cruel-hearted man is forever buried.

Many traces we found of him in the bog-girt island where he had hid his savage ally. A huge driving-wheel and a shaft half-filled with rubbish showed the position of an abandoned mine. Beside it were the crumbling remains of the cottages of the miners, driven away no doubt by the foul reek of the surrounding swamp. In one of these a staple and chain with a quantity of gnawed bones showed where the animal had been confined. A skeleton with a tangle of brown hair adhering to it lay among the debris.

"A dog!" said Holmes. "By Jove, a curly-haired spaniel. Poor Mortimer will never see his pet again. Well, I do not know that this place contains any secret which we have not already fathomed³⁶. He could hide his hound, but he could not hush its voice, and hence came those cries which even in daylight were not pleasant to hear. On an emergency he could keep

35. guess; assume, 36. understood

the hound in the out-house at Merripit, but it was always a risk, and it was only on the supreme day, which he regarded as the end of all his efforts, that he dared do it. This paste in the tin is no doubt the **luminous**³⁷ mixture with which the creature was **daubed**³⁸. It was suggested, of course, by the story of the family hell-hound, and by the desire to frighten old Sir Charles to death. No wonder the poor devil of a convict ran and screamed, even as our friend did, and as we ourselves might have done, when he saw such a creature bounding through the darkness of the moor upon his track. It was a cunning device, for, apart from the chance of driving your victim to his death, what peasant would venture to inquire too closely into such a creature should he get sight of it, as many have done, upon the moor? I said it in London, Watson, and I say it again now, that never yet have we helped to hunt down a more dangerous man than he who is lying yonder" — he swept his long arm towards the huge mottled expanse of green-spotched bog which stretched away until it merged into the russet slopes of the moor.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What sort of hound sprang upon Holmes and Watson from the wall of fog?
 2. What did Holmes find out when he put his hand upon the glowing muzzle of the beast which they had killed?
 3. What made Mrs. Stapleton give a sigh of satisfaction when she was informed that Sir Henry was safe and the hound was no more?
-

37. bright, 38. covered or smeared

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson and Lestrade took a wagon to a location near Merripit House.

They crept and came close enough to see that Sir Henry and Stapleton were talking and sharing cigars while they drank together. Stapleton left and walked to a small out building. Which he unlocked and then closed up again. He then returned to Sir Henry, who seemed distraught. Beryl Stapleton was nowhere to be seen.

Holmes worried that when a dense fog descended on the moor, no one would be able to see his hand in front of him. If Sir Henry did not come out within the next quarter hour. The plan would be failed and he was in danger of being murdered. Holmes, Lestrade and Watson moved to a higher ground. Soon they could hear Sir Henry walking alone on the moor through the thick smoky fog. Sir Henry was frightened and looked continually over his shoulder...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Watson, Lestrade and the Holmes leave the wagonette and go on towards the Merripit House.
2. Holmes makes sure that Lestrade is armed as well and cautions them to be quiet as they get nearer.
3. Watson moves closer to get a look inside the house. Unable to see Mrs. Stapleton, he sees the nervous baronet and Mr. Stapleton.
4. Mr. Stapleton soon leaves the room and enters the outhouse (where the hound is kept). He comes out and soon returns to the house and Watson goes back to the rocks.

5. A thick fog makes them nervous and they eventually must move back.
6. Sir Henry leaves the Merripit House presently, walking nervously by their hiding place.
7. The hound appears, with the glowing eyes and mouth, just as the legend had said.
8. Lestrade is scared beyond action, the hound has passed them by the time Watson and Holmes recover enough to fire at it.
9. Hearing the howl which implied that they had wounded it, they run after the beast and Holmes shoots it to death.
10. Sir Henry, who had fallen down to the ground did not get any physical injuries.
11. For the moment they leave him to recover on a rock and go look in the house.
12. Holmes does not expect (correctly) to find Stapleton there but do find Mrs. Stapleton.
13. She had been badly beaten and bound in a locked room full of butterflies and moths.
14. Once she is free by them she enquires about Sir Henry and the hound.
15. Now she knows that she has been used by her husband all along, she tells them of his retreat to a mine deep within the marshy land.
16. They manage to find his retreat and also the phosphorescence mixture used on the hound and the remains of Dr. Mortimer's spaniel.
17. At a certain point, Holmes is able to retrieve Sir Henry's stolen boot, but no signs of the naturalist after that. It is to be assumed that he died.

EXERCISE

1. What made Holmes ask Lestrade if he was armed while going to Merrit House which he called it the end of journey?
2. Why is Holmes too much disturbed regarding fast approaching of the dense cloud? How did the arrival of the clouds of the thick fog at a horrible speed seem to upset the success of Holmes' plan of apprehending the suspect and even put the life of Sir Henry in danger?
3. How did Holmes and his helping team members succeed in killing the family ghost of Baskervilles once and forever?
4. Explain briefly about the room hat Holmes and his team members broke open to locate Stapleton after killing the hound.
5. Explain briefly how Stapleton treated Mrs Stapleton in a bid to win the losing battle.

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the events, write character-sketch of the following characters.

1. Mr. Sherlock Holmes
2. Sir Henry
3. Mrs. Stapleton
4. Mr. Cartwright
5. Mr. Stapleton
6. Mr. Watson

Chapter 15

A Retrospection

It was the end of November, and Holmes and I sat, upon a raw and foggy night, on either side of a blazing fire in our sitting-room in Baker Street. Since the tragic upshot of our visit to Devonshire he had been engaged in two affairs of the utmost importance, in the first of which he had exposed the atrocious conduct of Colonel Upwood in connection with the famous card scandal of the Nonpareil Club, while in the second he had defended the unfortunate Mlle. Montpensier from the charge of murder which hung over her in connection with the death of her step-daughter, Mlle. Carere, the young lady who, as it will be remembered, was found six months later alive and married in New York. My friend was in excellent spirits over the success which had attended a succession of difficult and important cases, so that I was able to induce him to discuss the details of the Baskerville mystery. I had waited patiently for the opportunity for I was aware that he would never permit cases to overlap, and that his clear and logical mind would not be drawn from its present work to dwell upon memories of the past. Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer were, however, in London, on their way to that long voyage which had been recommended for the restoration¹ of his shattered nerves. They had

1. revival

called upon us that very afternoon, so that it was natural that the subject should come up for discussion.

"The whole course of events," said Holmes, "from the point of view of the man who called himself Stapleton was simple and direct, although to us, who had no means in the beginning of knowing the motives of his actions and could only learn part of the facts, it all appeared exceedingly complex. I have had the advantage of two conversations with Mrs. Stapleton, and the case has now been so entirely cleared up that I am not aware that there is anything which has remained a secret to us. You will find a few notes upon the matter under the heading B in my indexed² list of cases."

"Perhaps you would kindly give me a sketch of the course of events from memory."

"Certainly, though I cannot guarantee that I carry all the facts in my mind. Intense mental concentration has a curious way of blotting out what has passed. The barrister who has his case at his fingers' ends and is able to argue with an expert upon his own subject finds that a week or two of the courts will drive it all out of his head once more. So each of my cases displaces the last, and Mlle. Carere has blurred my recollection of Baskerville Hall. Tomorrow some other little problem may be submitted to my notice which will in turn dispossess the fair French lady and the infamous Upwood. So far as the case of the hound goes, however, I will give you the course of events as nearly as I can, and you will suggest anything which I may have forgotten.

"My inquiries show beyond all question that the family portrait did not lie, and that this fellow was

2. guiding symbol

indeed a Baskerville. He was a son of that Rodger Baskerville, the younger brother of Sir Charles, who fled with a sinister reputation to South America, where he was said to have died unmarried. He did, as a matter of fact, marry, and had one child, this fellow, whose real name is the same as his father's. He married Beryl Garcia, one of the beauties of Costa Rica, and, having **purloined**³ a considerable sum of public money, he changed his name to Vandeleur and fled to England, where he established a school in the east of Yorkshire. His reason for attempting this special line of business was that he had struck up an acquaintance with a consumptive tutor upon the voyage home, and that he had used this man's ability to make the undertaking a success. Fraser, the tutor, died however, and the school which had begun well sank from disrepute into **infamy**⁴. The Vandeleurs found it convenient to change their name to Stapleton, and he brought the remains of his fortune, his schemes for the future, and his taste for **entomology**⁵ to the south of England. I learned at the British Museum that he was a recognized authority upon the subject, and that the name of Vandeleur has been permanently attached to a certain moth which he had, in his Yorkshire days, been the first to describe.

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer arrive in London when the entire case of the hound of the Baskerville had been solved?

3. stolen; committed a theft, 4. dishonour, public disgrace, 5. science of insect life

2. How did Sherlock Holmes know all about the intentions of Stapleton in playing that mysterious game of the Hound of Baskerville leading to the death of Sir Charles and wonderful miraculous escape of Sir Henry?
 3. How can you prove that Stapleton was Baskerville?
 4. What made Stapleton (earlier called Vandeleur) enter into the profession of teaching and establish a school in the east of Yorkshire?
 5. Which school was closed down, that began well?
-

"We now come to that portion of his life which has proved to be of such intense interest to us. The fellow had evidently made inquiry and found that only two lives intervened between him and a valuable estate. When he went to Devonshire his plans were, I believe, exceedingly hazy, but that he meant mischief from the first is evident from the way in which he took his wife with him in the character of his sister. The idea of using her as a **decoy**⁶ was clearly already in his mind, though he may not have been certain how the details of his plot were to be arranged. He meant in the end to have the estate, and he was ready to use any tool or run any risk for that end. His first act was to establish himself as near to his ancestral home as he could, and his second was to cultivate a friendship with Sir Charles Baskerville and with the neighbours.

"The baronet himself told him about the family hound, and so prepared the way for his own death. Stapleton, as I will continue to call him, knew that the old man's heart was weak and that a shock would kill him. So much he had learned from Dr. Mortimer.

6. anything or anyone used as a bait

He had heard also that Sir Charles was superstitious and had taken this grim legend very seriously. His ingenious mind instantly suggested a way by which the baronet could be done to death, and yet it would be hardly possible to bring home the guilt to the murderer.

"Having conceived the idea he proceeded to carry it out with considerable finesse. An ordinary scheme would have been content to work with a real hound. The use of artificial means to make the creature **diabolical**⁷ was a flash of genius upon his part. The dog he bought in London from Ross and Mangles, the dealers in Fulham Road. It was the strongest and most savage in their possession. He brought it down by the North Devon line and walked a great distance over the moor so as to get it home without exciting any remarks. He had already from his insect hunts learned to penetrate the Grimpen Mire and so had found a safe hiding-place for the creature. Here he kennelled it and waited his chance.

"But it was some time coming. The old gentleman could not be decoyed outside of his grounds at night. Several times Stapleton lurked about with his hound but without **avail**⁸. It was during these fruitless quests that he, or rather his ally, was seen by the peasants, and that the legend of the demon hound received a new confirmation. He had hoped that the wife might lure Sir Charles to his ruin, but here she proved unexpectedly independent. She would **endeavour**⁹ to **entangle**¹⁰ the old gentleman in his sentimental attachment which might deliver him over to his enemy. Threats and even, I am sorry

7. devilish; evil, 8. use; usefulness, 9. try, 10. involve

say, blows refused to move her. She would have nothing to do with it, and for a time Stapleton was at a deadlock.

"He found a way out of his difficulties through the chance that Sir Charles, who had conceived a friendship for him, made him the minister of his charity in the case of this unfortunate woman, Mrs. Laura Lyons. By representing himself as a single man he acquired complete influence over her, and he gave her to understand that in the event of her obtaining a divorce from her husband he would marry her. His plans were suddenly brought to a head by his knowledge that Sir Charles was about to leave the Hall on the advice of Dr. Mortimer, with whose opinion he himself pretended to coincide. He must act at once, or his victim might get beyond his power. He therefore put pressure upon Mrs. Lyons to write this letter, imploring¹¹ the old man to give her an interview on the evening before his departure for London. He then, by a specious¹² argument, prevented her from going, and so had the chance for which he had waited.

"Driving back in the evening from Coombe Tracey he was in time to get his hound, to treat it with his infernal paint, and to bring the beast round to the gate at which he had reason to expect that he would find the old gentleman waiting. The dog, incited by its master, sprang over the wicket-gate and pursued the unfortunate baronet, who fled screaming down the yew alley. In that gloomy tunnel it must indeed have been a dreadful sight to see that huge black creature, with its flaming jaws and blazing eyes, bounding after

11. to pray for, 12. apparently right

its victim. He fell dead at the end of the alley from heart disease and terror. The hound had kept upon the grassy border while the baronet had run down the path, so that no track but the man's was visible. On seeing him lying still the creature had probably approached to sniff at him, but finding him dead had turned away again. It was then that it left the print which was actually observed by Dr. Mortimer. The hound was called off and hurried away to its lair¹³ in the Grimpen Mire, and a mystery was left which puzzled the authorities, alarmed the countryside, and finally brought the case within the scope of our observation.

"So much for the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. You perceive the devilish cunning of it, for really it would be almost impossible to make a case against the real murderer. His only accomplice was one who could never give him away, and the grotesque¹⁴, inconceivable nature of the device only served to make it more effective. Both of the women concerned in the case, Mrs. Stapleton and Mrs. Laura Lyons, were left with a strong suspicion against Stapleton. Mrs. Stapleton knew that he had designs upon the old man, and also of the existence of the hound. Mrs. Lyons knew neither of these things, but had been impressed by the death occurring at the time of an uncanceled appointment which was only known to him. However, both of them were under his influence, and he had nothing to fear from them. The first half of his task was successfully accomplished but the more difficult still remained.

13. a den or resting place of an animal, 14. fantastically ugly

"It is possible that Stapleton did not know of the existence of an heir in Canada. In any case he would very soon learn it from his friend Dr. Mortimer, and he was told by the latter all details about the arrival of Henry Baskerville. Stapleton's first idea was that this young stranger from Canada might possibly be done to death in London without coming down to Devonshire at all. He distrusted his wife ever since she had refused to help him in laying a trap for the old man, and he dared not leave her long out of his sight for fear he should lose his influence over her. It was for this reason that he took her to London with him. They lodged, I find, at the Mexborough Private Hotel, in Craven Street, which was actually one of those called upon by my agent in search of evidence. Here he kept his wife imprisoned in her room while he, disguised in a beard, followed Dr. Mortimer to Baker Street and afterwards to the station and to the Northumberland Hotel. His wife had some inkling¹⁵ of his plans; but she had such a fear of her husband — a fear founded upon brutal ill-treatment — that she dare not write to warn the man whom she knew to be in danger. If the letter should fall into Stapleton's hands her own life would not be safe. Eventually, as we know, she adopted the expedient of cutting out the words which would form the message, and addressing the letter in a disguised hand. It reached the baronet, and gave him the first warning of his danger.

"It was very essential for Stapleton to get some article of Sir Henry's attire so that, in case he was driven to use the dog, he might always have the

15. hint, 16. boldness or daring

means of setting him upon his track. With characteristic promptness and audacity¹⁶ he set about this at once, and we cannot doubt that the boots or chamber-maid of the hotel was well bribed to help him in his design. By chance, however, the first boot which was procured for him was a new one and, therefore, useless for his purpose. He then had it returned and obtained another — a most instructive incident, since it proved conclusively to my mind that we were dealing with a real hound, as no other supposition could explain this anxiety to obtain an old boot and this indifference to a new one. The more outre and grotesque an incident is the more carefully it deserves to be examined, and the very point which appears to complicate a case is, when duly considered and scientifically handled, the one which is most likely to elucidate¹⁷ it.

"Then we had the visit from our friends next morning, shadowed always by Stapleton in the cab. From his knowledge of our rooms and of my appearance, as well as from his general conduct, I am inclined to think that Stapleton's career of crime has been by no means limited to this single Baskerville affair. It is suggestive that during the last three years there have been four considerable burglaries in the west country, for none of which was any criminal ever arrested. The last of these, at Folkestone Court, in May, was remarkable for the cold-blooded pistolling¹⁸ of the page¹⁹, who surprised the masked and solitary burglar. I cannot doubt that Stapleton recruited his waning²⁰

17. explain; make clear, 18. shooting with a pistol, 19. a boy servant, 20. diminishing

resources in this fashion, and that for years he has been a desperate and dangerous man.

"We had an example of his readiness of resource that morning when he got away from us so successfully, and also of his audacity in sending back my own name to me through the cabman. From that moment he understood that I had taken over the case in London, and that therefore there was no chance for him there. He returned to Dartmoor and awaited the arrival of the baronet."

"One moment!" said I. "You have, no doubt, described the sequence of events correctly, but there is one point which you have left unexplained. What became of the hound when its master was in London?"

"I have given some attention to this matter and it is undoubtedly of importance. There can be no question that Stapleton had a confidant, though it is unlikely that he ever placed himself in his power by sharing all his plans with him. There was an old manservant at Merripit House, whose name was Anthony. His connection with the Stapletons can be traced for several years, as far back as the schoolmastering days, so that he must have been aware that his master and mistress were really husband and wife. This man has disappeared and has escaped from the country. It is suggestive that Anthony is not a common name in England, while Antonio is so in all Spanish or Spanish-American countries. The man, like Mrs. Stapleton herself, spoke good English, but with a curious *lisp*²¹ accent. I have myself seen this old man cross the Grimpen Mire by the path which Stapleton had

21. speaking imperfectly as a child

marked out. It is very probable, therefore, that in the absence of his master it was he who cared for the hound, though he may never have known the purpose for which the beast was used.

"The Stapletons then went down to Devonshire, whither they were soon followed by Sir Henry and you. One word now as to how I stood myself at that time. It may possibly recur to your memory that when I examined the paper upon which the printed words were fastened I made a close inspection for the watermark. In doing so I held it within a few inches of my eyes, and was conscious of a faint smell of the scent known as white jessamine. There are seventy-five perfumes, which it is very necessary that a criminal expert should be able to distinguish from each other, and cases have more than once within my own experience depended upon their prompt recognition. The scent suggested the presence of a lady, and already my thoughts began to turn towards the Stapletons. Thus I had made certain of the hound, and had guessed at the criminal before ever we went to the west country.

"It was my game to watch Stapleton. It was evident, however, that I could not do this if I were with you, since he would be keenly on his guard. I deceived everybody, therefore, yourself included, and I came down secretly when I was supposed to be in London. My hardships were not so great as you imagined, though such trifling details must never interfere with the investigation of a case. I stayed for the most part at Coombe Tracey, and only used the hut upon the moor when it was necessary to be near the scene of action. Cartwright had come down with me, and in his disguise as a country boy he was

of great assistance to me. I was dependent upon him for food and clean linen. When I was watching Stapleton, Cartwright was frequently watching you, so that I was able to keep my hand upon all the strings.

"I have already told you that your reports reached me rapidly, being forwarded instantly from Baker Street to Coombe Tracey. They were of great service to me, and especially that one incidentally truthful piece of biography of Stapletons. I was able to establish the identity of the man and the woman and knew at last exactly how I stood. The case had been considerably complicated through the incident of the escaped convict and the relations between him and the Barrymores. This also you cleared up in a very effective way, though I had already come to the same conclusions from my own observations.

"By the time that you discovered me upon the moor I had a complete knowledge of the whole business, but I had not a case which could go to a jury. Even Stapleton's attempt upon Sir Henry that night which ended in the death of the unfortunate convict did not help us much in proving murder against our man. There seemed to be no alternative but to catch him red-handed, and to do so we had to use Sir Henry, alone and apparently unprotected, as a bait. We did so, and at the cost of a severe shock to our client we succeeded in completing our case and driving Stapleton to his destruction. That Sir Henry should have been exposed to this is, I must confess, a **reproach**²² to my management of the case, but we had no means of foreseeing the terrible and paralyzing

22. blame

spectacle which the beast presented, nor could we **predict**²³ the fog which enabled him to burst upon us at such short notice. We succeeded in our object at a cost which both the specialist and Dr. Mortimer assure me will be a temporary one. A long journey may enable our friend to recover not only from his shattered nerves but also from his wounded feelings. His love for the lady was deep and sincere, and to him the saddest part of all this black business was that he should have been deceived by her.

"It only remains to indicate the part which she had played throughout. There can be no doubt that Stapleton exercised an influence over her which may have been love or may have been fear, or very possibly both, since they are by no means **incompatible**²⁴ emotions. It was, at least, absolutely effective. At his command she consented to pass as his sister, though he found the limits of his power over her when he endeavoured to make her the direct **accessory**²⁵ to murder. She was ready to warn Sir Henry so far as she could without implicating her husband, and again and again she tried to do so. Stapleton himself seems to have been capable of jealousy, and when he saw the baronet paying court to the lady, even though it was part of his own plan, still he could not help interrupting with a passionate outburst which revealed the fiery soul which his self-contained manner so cleverly concealed. By encouraging the intimacy he made it certain that Sir Henry would frequently come to Merripit House and that he would sooner or later get the opportunity which he desired. On the day of the crisis, however,

23. foretell, 24. that cannot co-exist; clashing, 25. accomplice

his wife turned suddenly against him. She had learned something of the death of the convict, and she knew that the hound was being kept in the outhouse on the evening that Sir Henry was coming to dinner. She taxed her husband with his intended crime, and a furious scene followed in which he showed her for the first time that she had a rival in his love. Her **fidelity**²⁶ turned in an instant to bitter hatred, and he saw that she would betray him. He tied her up, therefore, that she might have no chance of warning Sir Henry, and he hoped, no doubt, that when the whole countryside put down the baronet's death to the curse of his family, as they certainly would do, he could win his wife back to accept an accomplished fact and to keep silent upon what she knew. In this I fancy that in any case he made a miscalculation, and that, if we had not been there, his doom would none the less have been sealed. A woman of Spanish blood does not **condone**²⁷ such an injury so lightly. And now, my dear Watson, without referring to my notes, I cannot give you a more detailed account of this curious case. I do not know that anything essential has been left unexplained."

"He could not hope to frighten Sir Henry to death as he had done the old uncle with his bogie hound."

"The beast was savage and half-starved. If its appearance did not frighten its victim to death, at least it would paralyze the resistance which might be offered."

"No doubt. There only remains one difficulty. If Stapleton came into the succession, how could he explain the fact that he, the heir, had been living

26. loyalty or faithfulness, 27. forgive; overlook

unannounced under another name so close to the property? How could he claim it without causing suspicion and inquiry?"

"It is a formidable difficulty, and I fear that you ask too much when you expect me to solve it. The past and the present are within the field of my inquiry, but what a man may do in the future is a hard question to answer. Mrs. Stapleton has heard her husband discuss the problem on several occasions. There were three possible courses. He might claim the property from South America, establish his identity before the British authorities there and so obtain the fortune without ever coming to England at all, or he might adopt an elaborate disguise during the short time that he need be in London; or, again, he might furnish an accomplice²⁸ with the proofs and papers, putting him in as heir, and retaining a claim upon some proportion²⁹ of his income. We cannot doubt from what we know of him that he would have found some way out of the difficulty. And now, my dear Watson, we have had some weeks of severe work, and for one evening, I think, we may turn our thoughts into more pleasant channels. I have a box for 'Les Huguenots.' Have you heard the De Reszkes? Might I trouble you then to be ready in half an hour, and we can stop at Marcini's for a little dinner on the way?"

Ask Yourself While Reading

1. What made Stapleton take his wife in his sister's character while his shifting to Devonshire after closing down his school and changing his name from Vandeleur to Stapleton?

28. ally; a person who knowingly helps another in a wrong doing.
 29. comparative share

2. Write down the two important tasks of Stapleton after shifting to Devonshire.
 3. What was the method of Sir Charles Baskerville for digging his own grave?
 4. How did Stapleton know regarding the Archille's heel of Sir Charles Baskerville?
 5. What made Stapleton purchase the most savage and strongest dog from London and make it a diabolic?
 6. What made Mrs. Stapleton deny to cooperate with her husband in trapping Sir Charles Baskerville in an emotional attachment?
 7. How did Mr. Stapleton succeed to get the assistance of Mrs. Lyons in getting his cunning design on Sir. Charles executed?
-

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTER

Understanding the Plot

The following summary of the case was given by Sherlock Holmes to Dr. Watson a few months later. Stapleton was the son of Sir Roger Baskerville, who was Sir Charles' brother. Sir Roger had spent most of his life in Central America, where he married and had one son (Stapleton) who married Beryl Garcia. After stealing a fortune, he changed his name to Vandeleur and went to England where he established a school in the East of Yorkshire.

Stapleton developed an international reputation as an entomologist. He moved to Devonshire with the intention of getting his family's fortune. He became a friend and neighbour to Sir Charles and Dr. Mortimer who told him about the bad heart condition of Sir Charles. He came up with the plan to use the family legend of the hound to kill Charles. At first, Stapleton had wanted his wife to lure Sir Charles into a love trap, but she had refused...

Main Events of the Chapter

1. Circumstances are favourable for Watson to ask about the details of the case.
2. Holmes tells the course of events from memory. Stapleton is the son of Roger Baskerville, born in South America. He married Beryl Garcia of Costa Rica and after he stole a large amount of money, they came to England.
3. They changed their name to Vandeleur and formed a school with the help of a tutor named Traser.
4. The school failed with a bad reputation.
5. Under the name Stapleton, they moved to Devonshire, where he discovered that he was in line for a huge inheritance.
6. Not knowing about anything or of Stapleton's violent nature, Sir Charles and Dr. Mortimer talked freely with him, gave him additional information also.
7. He decided to base the crime on the old family legend, bought the vicious hound in London and walked it out to the hiding place in Grimpen Mire.
8. Finding his wife to be non-cooperative, he used Mrs. Lyons to lure Sir Charles out at night so that he can let loose the hound that pursued the old man until he fell dead.
9. As Sir Henry arrived, Stapleton went into London where he followed him and had the boat stolen, so that the hound would have a scent.
10. Mrs. Stapleton had also come to London.
11. She did manage to get the note to Sir Henry and the scent of the perfume on it helped lead Holmes to the correct suspect.
12. Anthony, their servant, took care of the hound.
13. Holmes stayed at Coombe Tracey.
14. With the help of Cartwright, he was able to observe much without being known.

15. The only thing left that Holmes was not able to answer completely was how Stapleton planned on getting the inheritance if he had managed to kill Sir Henry.
16. The crime had been solved once again. Relaxing from their difficult work, Watson and Holmes are content to get dinner and take in the Opera.

EXERCISE

1. Explain briefly how were Mrs. Stapleton, Mrs. Laura Lyons and Dr. Mortimer used by Stapleton to usurp the Baskerville House and the whole property attached to it.
2. What made Sherlock Holmes send Watson along with Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer to the Baskerville House while excusing himself to stay in London by pretending of some emergency in some of his cases?
3. Explain briefly of Holmes' observation about the activities of Stapleton.
4. Why was Sir Henry suggested to visit a long tour after the final settlement of the case of his family ghost?
5. How could Stapleton describe the fact if he came into existence that he, the heir, had been living unannounced under another name so close to the property, without creating suspicion and inquiry?

Character-Sketches

On the basis of your understanding of the novel's incidents draw character sketches of the following persons.

1. Mr. Sherlock Holmes
2. Sir Henry
3. Mrs. Stapleton
4. Mr. Stapleton
5. Mr. Watson
6. Mrs. Laura Lyons

SOLVED SAMPLE QUESTIONS

(Strictly as per the CBSE Guidelines)

Part A. Themes and Plot-based Questions

(to be described in about 150 words)

(8 marks)

1. What sort of role does supernaturalism play in 'The Hound of Baskervilles'?

Ans. The supernaturalism plays a big role in 'The Hound of Baskervilles'. Conan Doyle had used it on many occasions in the service of his plot line and in dialogue with other themes.

As far as the plot is concerned, Conan Doyle has taken full advantage of the excitement and power of a Gothic style mystery—an ancient curse and a common plot line, with two bodies at the hands of possibly a supernatural beast. At the same time, however, he evinces a strong faith, at least, in Holmes, of a logical, rational explanation for even the most mysterious occurrences.

Thematically, the supernatural ties together questions of class which run throughout the novel. Superstition is linked to weakness as the case of infirm Sir Charles, but most prominently with lower class status. In this sense, it is interesting that Doyle regular refers to the superstitious commoners but only rarely lets us meet them first hand.

2. In 'The Hound of Baskervilles', what do the family portraits and the moor signify?

Ans. The family portrait of Sir Hugo that enables Holmes to figure out the motive symbolises the connection between the past and the present. The Hall itself has more modern additions attached to the old ones, and on the moor, there are huts from the time of Neolithic man not far from the houses of the people living now (at the time of the case). It also represents the Baskerville inheritance. Besides the estate and title, there is also the curse. Sir Charles and Sir Henry to a slightly lesser extent, lived in fear of the Hound, because they descendents. Stapleton had got his looks and personality from Hugo Baskerville as well as his father.

3. How did Stapleton succeed in his attempt and design to kill Sir Charles?

Ans. Sir Charles himself had told Stapleton about the family hound, and so prepared the way for his own death. Stapleton knew that the old man's heart was weak, and that a shock would kill him. He had learned this from Dr. Mortimer. He had also heard that Sir Charles was superstitious and had taken the grim legend very seriously. His ingenious mind constantly suggested a way by which Sir Charles could be done to death and it would not be possible to bring home the real murderer.

He proceeded to carry out his concerned idea. He used artificial means to make the hound diabolical. Several times Stapleton lurked about with his hound but to no avail. Here he was seen by peasants and the legend of the demon dog received a new confirmation. He hoped in vain that his so called wife might lure Sir Charles to his run. She did not endeavour to entangle the old gentleman. Threats and blows refused to move her.

Stapleton found his way out when Sir Charles made him the minister of his charity in case of Mrs. Laura Lyons. Showing himself as single, he got complete influence over her. He came to know that Sir Charles was about to leave the Hall. He put pressure upon Mrs. Lyons to write to the old man imploring him to give her an interview on the evening before departing for London. Then by some argument, prevented her from going and had the chance for which he had waited. He was in time to get his hound and brought the beast round to the gate at which he expected the old gentleman to be waiting. The dog, incited by its master, sprang over the wicket gate and pursued the unfortunate baronet thereby making Stapleton successful in his attempt.

4. What became of the hound when his master was in London?

Ans. There could be no questioning the fact that Stapleton had a confident, though it was very unlikely that he ever placed himself in his power by sharing all his plans with him. There was an old manservant at Merripit House, whose name was Anthony. His connection with the Stapleton could be traced for several years, as far back as schoolmastery

days so that he must have come to know that his master and mistress were really husband and wife. This man has disappeared and had escaped from the country. The man spoke good English but with a peculiar limping accent. Watson himself had seen that old man cross the Grimpen Mire by the path which Stapleton had marked out. It was very much possible, therefore, that in the absence of his master, it was he who cared for the hound, thought he may never have known the purpose for which the beast was used.

5. As per Dr. Watson's report to Sherlock Holmes, what has been described about Mr. Frankland of Lafter Hall?

Ans. Mr. Frankland, as described by Dr. Watson was an elderly man, red face, white haired and choleric. He was quite passionate about British Law. He fought for the mere pleasure of fighting. He was learned in old manorial and communal rights and applied this knowledge, sometimes, in favour of the villagers, and, at times, against them. He was said to have about seven lawsuits upon his hands at that time. Apart from the law, he seemed a kindly, good natured person. Being an amateur astronomer he had an excellent telescope with which he lay upon the roof of his own house and swept the moor all day in the hope of catching a glimpse of the escaped convict. He helped keep Dr. Watson and others from being monotonous and gave a little comic relief wherever it was badly required.

Part B. Character Sketches in about 130 Words.

(7 Marks)

6. Who is the protagonist of the novel, 'The Hound of Baskervilles'? What does the detective ultimately figure out?

Ans. The protagonist of any story is the main character who traditionally undergoes some sort of change. He or she must usually overcome some opposing forces. The main protagonist, the chief and the most important character in the novel is Mr. Sherlock Holmes, given his ability to drive the plot forward. Dr. Watson could be taken as a secondary protagonist in this novel as a help and a narrator but not the main one since attention in the novel was focussed on Holmes' management of the case.

The detective ultimately figured out that it was not a supernatural hound brought on by a curse that was the Baskerville problem, but a person with interests in the inheritable. He hid himself out in the area to continue his investigation in secret, until Watson and then Selden's death made his presence known. Then, when the pair arrived at Baskerville Hall, Holmes uncovered the last piece of evidence in the case, the motive, the purpose—Stapleton is a Baskerville, as could be seen in the portrait of Hugo Baskerville, and hence stood in line to inherit the fortune and estate. Holmes brought the case to a close with his plan to have Sir Henry leave the Stapleton house at night and walked across the moor until the hound appeared and was shot to death.

7. What was the reason for Conan Doyle to choose Watson to narrate the 'Hound' instead of Sherlock Holmes?

Ans. Doyle used Watson instead of Sherlock Holmes as a narrator for two main reasons—the first being that Watson was not as intuitive as Sherlock Holmes, in so much so that he allowed the reader to join him as he attempted to live up to the master's standards. Had it been Sherlock Holmes telling the story, we would have had little opportunity to solve our mystery ourselves. For example—Holmes' various and sundry revelations of the truth; which preclude our participation by effectively beating us to the punch.

The next reason why Doyle used Watson as a narrator was that it allowed for the pace he was looking for. Even if any of Holmes' character could give us a chance now and then by keeping his conclusions to himself, he was still too quick a think to take on the difficult task of relating all the facts in detail. Only a slow witted person like Watson was fit for the job. When Holmes' character appeared, he served more as a catalyst for the action in the story, bringing everything to a quick and exciting climax.

8. Stapleton's character adds to the strong classist themes woven in this book. What would you like to speak about his character?

Ans. Intended to incarnate ill will and malice, Stapleton is conflated at various points with the lecherous libertine Hugo, whom he resembles. Stapleton is a black hearted, violent hidden beneath a benign, bookish surface.

If Hugo operates as a kind of Doppelgänger for his heir, then the convict offers an interesting parallel as well. Serving mainly as a red herring in the mysterious death of Sir Charles Baskerville, the convict also operates as a cover for the real culprit, Stapleton. Personifying 'peculiar ferocity' and ever 'dubious sanity', the convict is shown to be a pathetic, animalistic figure on whom the detectives ultimately take pity. It is not so with Stapleton, a man with a 'murderous heart' and 'a wolf in sheep's clothing'. Stapleton, is a worthy adversary because of his birth right. If a convict is a simple murderer, he is also simply born, related by blood to the Baskervilles' domestic help. Hence, the convict is a part of a lower class than Holmes and so is not a worthy adversary. Stapleton 'moreover' is an intellectual and when his evil sides comes out, his hidden nobility comes out as well. Once Holmes is handling an educated and noble rival he begins to take things much more seriously. This way, Stapleton's character adds to the strong classist themes imbedded in this book.

9. Having gone through the novel, 'The Hound of Baskervilles', what do you think the hound represents?

Ans. The hound that haunts the Baskerville family primarily represents Stapleton. He tracks down and kills his relatives as a result of his ancestor, Rodger Baskerville, from whom he inherited not only a claim in the Baskerville line but also his personality. The title of the novel refers to the Baskerville family legend; a giant hound killed evil Hugo and is said to continue dooming the line. Stapleton, a Baskerville, owns a hound, which he uses to kill Sir Charles and make an attempt to likewise to Sir Henry. Thus, it could also refer to Stapleton as the family hound. The Barrymores have a hound of their own in a way in Selden the convict. Like the hound he lives out on the moor, has a wild appearance, glow associated with him (candle-light instead phosphorous) and is also dead by the end of the story.

10. As per the reading of the text, what do you know about the brother of Mrs. Barrymore as told by her own self?

Ans. Mrs. Barrymore told that her name was Selden and her brother was younger to her. As a young lad he was humoured to a great extent and was given his own way in everything.

till the time he came to think that the world was made for his pleasure and he could do whatever he liked. As he grew up, he made friends with wicked people and the devil entered into him until he broke his mother's heart and dragged the family name in dirt from crime to crime he sank lower and lower but for Mrs. Barrymore, he was always the little curly-headed boy that she had nursed and played with, as an elder sister would. That was the reason that he broke prison. He knew that his sister and her husband would never refuse to help him. When he dragged himself one night, tired and starving, with the warder hard at his heels, what else could the Barrymores do but help him out? They took him in and fed him and later went hiding on the moor. As long as he was there, he would not be deserted. The woman's words came with such an intense earnestness that they carried conviction with them.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

(Based on themes, incidents, events and characters)

Note: While answering a question, you are expected to be guided by your own perspective, which in turn is based on facts as given in the text.

Part A. Theme and Plot-based Questions

(To be described in about 150 words)

(8 marks)

1. How did Sherlock Holmes substantiate his proof that the stranger was a youth under thirty, unambitious, amiable, absent minded and the possessor of a favourite dog?
2. Where does the story of Baskerville Hall as described by Hugo Baskerville to his sons in the family document, surface from?
3. What was the shrouded mystery of the footprints explored near the body of Charles Baskerville by Dr. Mortimer? Do you think that the new exploration could give a deciding twist in the story?
4. What according to Sherlock Holmes, were the main question in the beginning of the case to be addressed?
5. Why did Sherlock Holmes suspect that the letter had been prepared applying the words and phrases clipped from the

leading newspaper? Why was the word moor in the letter written in ink and on the other hand, other letters were written in print format?

6. What made Sherlock Holmes sound a little worried about the security of Dr. Watson at the time of washing him for his meaningful stay at Baskerville Hall, with Sir Henry Baskerville?
7. What was the uncommon thing that took place in the dead of night on the very first day of Watson's stay at the Baskerville House? Give suitable reasons for calling it uncommon.
8. What made Mrs. Stapleton want to hide her warning that she had given to Watson from her husband? Explain with suitable reasons.
9. What was the main reason for distracting Sir Henry from coming down to the Baskerville Hall to settle over there?
10. Describe four exchanged conversation between Stapleton and Sir Henry when Stapleton must have said to Sir Henry when he talked to Mrs. Stapleton?
11. Describe in brief about the incidents that strengthened Mr. Watson's doubt regarding Mr. Barrymore after landing at Baskerville House.
12. Explain briefly about the incidents that created doubts around Stapleton in Watson's mind.
13. What made Miss Stapleton saying to Sir Henry that she would never feel pleasure until he had left the place, though she was equally fascinated by him?
14. In the light of Watson's own remark, "To act as the spy upon a friend was a hateful task", shed light if Watson's decision to follow Sir Henry stealthily in the moor in spite of being clearly told not to accompany him was totally justified or a breach of the spirit of friendship.
15. How did Barrymore showed his thankfulness to Sir Henry when he and Watson assured him not to call the police and discuss the case of his fugitive brother-in-law to the police?
16. What made Laura write letters to Sir Charles of Baskerville as reported by her?
17. What made Laura not inform Sir Charles of Baskerville of the assistance she had accepted from another source?
18. What made Stapleton declare himself to be bachelor in spite of his being married?
19. What made Laura Lyons so clearly linked with Mr. Stapleton?

20. What made Watson and Holmes take the body of the man, lying flat and prostrate with his face downward and broken neck on the rock, for the body of Sir Henry?
21. How did Holmes and Watson explore that the body was not of Sir Henry but that of Selden, the criminal?
22. How did Holmes make Laura Lyons reveal the essential secrecy linked with the death of Sir Charles?
23. Shed light on the points which were very essential in the case of Sir Charles' death and the hound but lacked enough proofs to make a foolproof case against the suspect.
24. Describe briefly about Holmes' observation of Stapleton's activities?
25. What made Sir Henry advised to visit on a long tour after the case of his family ghost had been settled finally?
26. Write down an imaginary story in your own language explaining what happened to Sir Henry after the jury's verdict against Stapleton, keeping in mind regarding Mrs. Stapleton and Mrs. Laura Lyons.

Part B. Character Sketches in about 130 words.

(7 Marks)

1. Sherlock Holmes
2. Dr. Watson
3. Mr. Stapleton
4. Sir Charles Baskerville
5. Sir Henry
6. Dr. Mortimer
7. Barrymore
8. Mrs. Stapleton
9. Mrs. Baskerville
10. Mrs. Laura Lyons

The Hound of the Baskervilles

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Sir Henry Baskerville, a young man recently arrived from North America to take possession of the estate of his uncle, who's died suddenly, seeks the counsel and protection of Sherlock Holmes. The wealthy Sir Charles apparently died fleeing in terror from an unknown enemy; meanwhile, Sir Henry himself is receiving mysterious threats, perhaps related to a Baskerville family curse involving an innocent maiden, a reprobate ancestor, and a vengeful hound.

Holmes, busy with other affairs, sends the faithful Dr. Watson to the country to keep watch over Sir Henry and send back reports, which are soon flowing with accounts of the gloomy moor and surroundings.

Among the cast: Dr. Mortimer, the eccentric country practitioner; the enigmatic Barrymores, who have been servants to the Baskervilles for generations; Stapleton and his ubiquitous butterfly net, not to mention his sister, who quickly becomes Sir Henry's romantic interest. Meanwhile a murderer has escaped from the nearby prison and is loose on the moor, spine-chilling howls are heard at night by sober men, and Watson and Sir Henry are more nervous than they care to admit. Surprise revelations and terrifying moments ensue before Holmes brings things to a generally safe conclusion.

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